

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

FANZINE

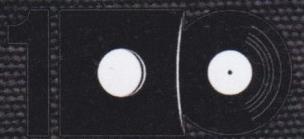


TRIAL

BLACK
REBEL

**CUTTING
THROUGH**

taken



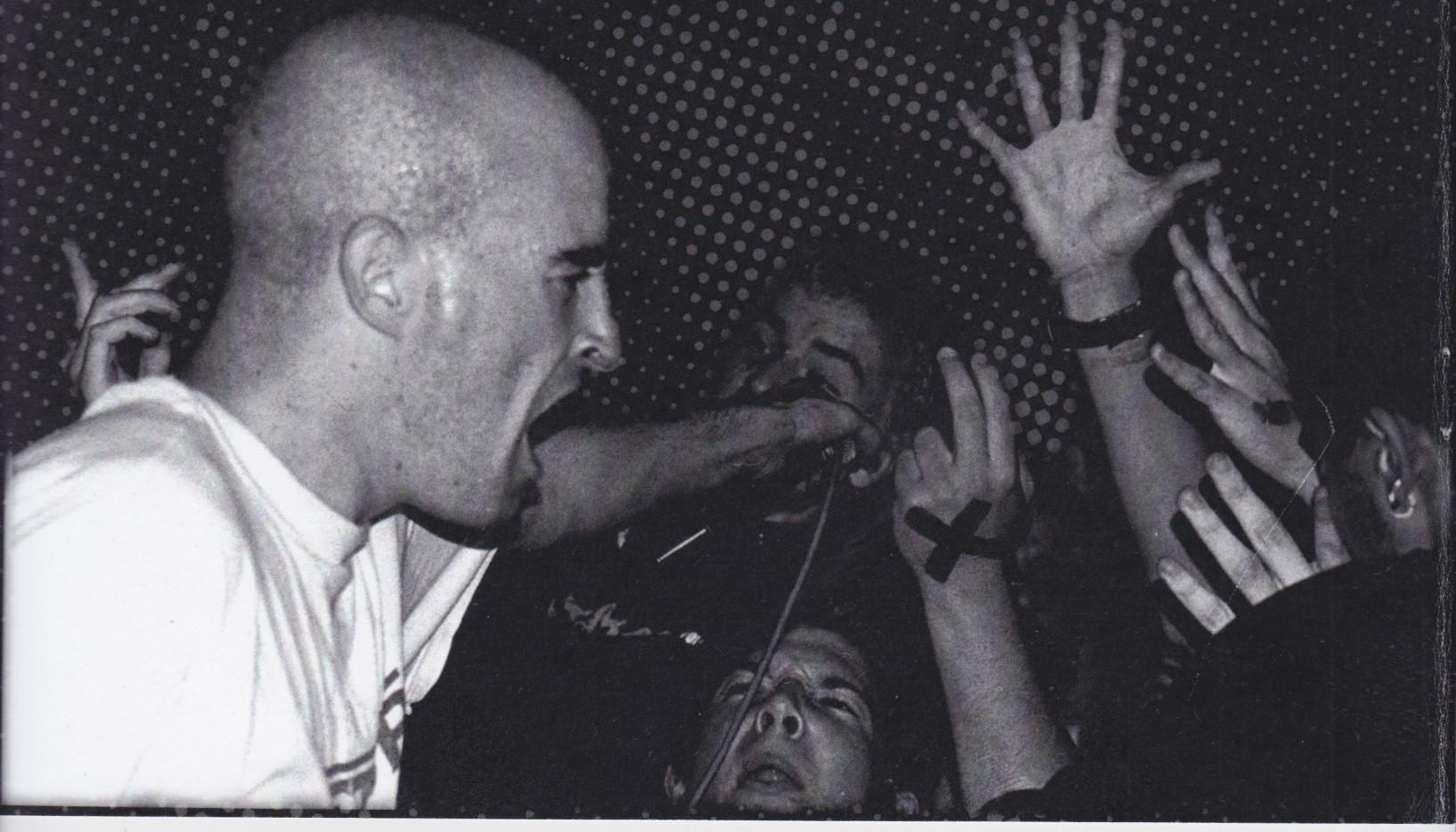
WORDS OR LESS

when anger has

* no motive and force has
no direction

a lack of self control invites

every distraction



INTRO

Thanks for checking out issue 3. It's been almost a year since i finished issue 2. But I've had a lot of set backs, personal stuff, I relocated, and generally i just procrastinated. But now it's done, and I'm pretty happy with the content.

It's May, summer is almost here, there is some cool shows coming up... hope you like the 'zine and have a good summer.

-B

Playlist for assembling Issue #3:

Godspeed - Swimmer's Ear
Integrity - Early stuff
In My Eyes - all
Fiddlehead - Springtime and Blind
Dag Nasty - Four on the Floor
Thin Lizzy - Black Rose
Racquet Club - LP
DARE - Flexi
Ecostrike - Voice of Strength
Culture Abuse - Peach

-crucial-

- stage dives
- pocket prints
- D.I.Y.
- intelligent lyrics
- cover songs
- being considerate of
•ther people at shows

-not crucial-

- crowd killing
- 2 song 7"s
- only releasing music
on bandcamp
- package tours with no local
bands
- mainstream acceptability



LIVE 5 VIBR Cavers Found Dead

EYEWITNESS NEWS

I called Joe Ferguson to talk to him about an incident that took place in August 2005.

I first met Joe around 2009. Not long after, while on our way to a show, I asked Joe what the railroad spike he had tattooed on his leg meant...

"It's for my friend who died; Blake Donner."

"I remember when that happened... you knew him?"

"Yeah, I was there, I had to go call the police... I was the only person who didn't die that night"

-What happened that night?

Bafabegiya and Disconnect (Reno) were finishing up a US tour, we were playing a show in Provo with Parallax and Rail Spike, we had a super fun time at the show, we made dinner and ate and hung out at the Cunningham residence. Parallax had just finished recording Mediums and Messages and Blake (vocalist of Parallax) played a rough mix for me. And we were just hanging out and it was just one of those situations where whatever fun, ridiculous thing to do in the town you're in, you do it. Maybe you break into the local swimming pool and jump off the high dive... but they had this cave which was known amongst the DIY punk circles. And I had heard about it from some other friends. And it was like 2 in the morning so I was like , Sure, I'll go. So Scott, Ariel, Jen, Blake and I all wanted to go so we jumped into a car and all went out to this well-hidden cave in the side of this mountain and you'd never know it was there. Even just going into the cave itself is kinda scary; you had to get down onto all fours and crawl through water, and then once you were inside you could stand up. You walked down this pretty narrow corridor and then it just ends and there is this pool of water there that's maybe 4 feet deep. Basically what you do is go under water and there is this rope you follow to swim through maybe a 15 foot long passageway completely submerged into this other room. And this other room is just this completely dark room, and there is enough room up above that you can kinda hang out in there, but it's completely enclosed. You go in there and then come back.

So we had flashlights and we set up candles in the first corridor all the way to the pool. And I was actually the first person to get into the water and I was so scared I was like, "I can't do this, no way". So I stayed back. And, I think, out of the 4 of them, only 2 of them has done it before. They all got in there, one at a time, and went into the other room. The plan was that they were going to swim through one at a time, then come back out one at a time. And all 4 of them swam through, and I was waiting and they hadn't come back out. And I didn't know how long they were planning on staying in there exactly. And it's all kind of like a time warp. I'm sitting in this cold cave, and I don't really know how long time-wise things are going on. At one point I actually

went out of the cave and went around to see if there was some other exit or something like that. Then I went back in and they still hadn't come out, and it seemed like they had been in there for too long. It may have been 10 minutes, it may have been 30 minutes or more, it's hard to say. I was splashing the water, screaming, yelling, but it was an echo chamber, and I don't think they would have even been able to hear anything. Then I think I went out of the cave again, and it was probably 5am and the sun was starting to come up, and I knew something was wrong. So I went down to the car that we had and I grabbed the phone that we had and I called one of my friends from Reno who was on the tour and told them that they had been in there for a while and I was kind of freaking out, and I asked if I could talk to someone who had been in the cave before. Someone got on the phone and I explained to them what happened, and he was like, "that's not right, they should be out of there by now."

So I called 911, the police arrived. A bunch of kids had come up, and were like, "what is going on?" And it turns out what had happened was that they had gone in, hung out in there for a minute, and on the way back out, one of them got disoriented, or hit their head or something, and got trapped in that underwater passageway and prevented anyone else from getting out because there was no way around them. The search and rescue team came that morning and drained the whole thing to get all the water out of there to get their bodies out. And I was the one who just didn't go in, so I was the one who didn't die that night. You know, everyday I think about those guys, and there's not a day that goes by that I don't regret even doing that stupid thing. 'Cause those were 4 really amazing people and they didn't get to finish their lives because of some stupid thing we did as kids.

-I can't imagine what that would be like. Do you remember the months directly after that and how you felt?

Like I said, there's not a day that goes by that I don't think about those guys. It's one of those ex-

periences that doesn't ever go away. The days and weeks and months directly following it I was a total mess; I couldn't eat, couldn't think, couldn't work. I was so distraught. We ended up leaving and going back to Reno, there was nothing we could do. When we got back I was pretty much comatose for a week or two. I couldn't function. The only 1 out of the 4 that I knew previously was Blake, the other 3 I had met that day. So it was 1 friend and 3 of his very close friends were gone. I had a lot of people reach out to me, and that was very comforting, but it was very traumatic.

-This incident happened not long before the Trial reunion in Seattle, and Parallax was supposed to play the preshow, so they ended up playing an instrumental set. So many friends and kids from Utah had come out and sang the songs. Its was a vocal chorus. It always struck me how emotional everyone was and how well loved Blake was.

Definitely. Blake was probably one of the most influential people in his direct community. You talk to anyone from Provo from that era, and they talk about how he was kind of the glue that held that scene together. Not only playing in bands, but supporting other bands and artists, his work in the art scene, Food Not Bombs, and a lot of really awesome DIY stuff. So it was a huge loss for that community to lose someone like that so suddenly. And Blake was so young. They had just recorded this awesome record, and I think it was the beginning of what he wanted to do as a band, and as a singer and lyricist. He was just kind of getting started in a lot of ways. A huge impact for the community and the DIY hardcore in general.

-When we spoke the other day you said something interesting: that it had been so long that the incident had almost become a caricature of itself in some ways. What did you mean by that?

The realness of the situation and the memory of it... like, some things are extremely vivid, and other things are like, "is this real?" I feel like when you go through something that traumatic things get sort of compartmentalized in your brain and things are kind of vague but also, if you slip back into that moment it becomes part of your existence right then. If I think hard enough about what happened I can transport myself into that cave again. And in that way it's a larger than life instance. There is those defining moments of your existence, and for me that's one of them. It becomes this thing that you can never let go of, you can never forget it, never banish it from your mind.

-It's been almost 13 years, you have 2 kids now, you turn 39 tomorrow, has your feelings about it changed? How do you view it looking back at it now?

My view of it has certainly changed. Reflecting on it at almost 39, you change as you grow and you look back on things you did as a kid, and you're like, "that was so fucking stupid, why did I even think that was gonna be a good idea." And there are a lot of those, and that's one of them. But when you're young, you're living in the moment, and not thinking about consequences necessarily, you're not thinking of you're future necessarily, you're living in the moment, and that's what punk is about. But unfortunately sometimes those living-in-the-moment situations can lead to really really terrible consequences and there is no going back. In my case, I learned about myself, and something larger than that situation, but unfortunately they can't, they didn't survive it. So think that especially when my son was born a few years later, when you have a child you step back and reflect on. Well, now I'm not living just for me, it's about my kid or my kids, and it's not so much about me and I can't go through life making these kind of mistakes.

-Like I said, at that show in Seattle, the night before the Trial reunion, there was such a strange feeling and such a wide range of emotions. But what I really remember is that a band from Tacoma played, and he seemed so frustrated and angry about the situation, and said something along the lines of, "they died in a cave... is that fucking fun...is that entertaining?" And there is just this strange dichotomy between the punk ideal of Live life to the fullest, Live in the moment, and then there is real life consequences for it, and how do we navigate that...

I'm pretty sure it was Owen Hart and it was Tim Trust, being frustrated at the situation, because I think he had done the cave swim before, so he was probably thinking, "I know that place, I know that situation, I know that feeling, I know how cold that dirt is, I know how cold that water is..." he was probably wrestling with that exact idea of, What if it had been me, What if I had been trapped in there and couldn't get out. And is it worth dying for? Is it worth living in the moment because you now have paid that price? And 4 people from our community are gone because we wanted to have a fun night. It's totally ludicrous thinking back on it.

And at that time in my life it wasn't just one time in one cave, it was a lot of stupid things that could have cost me or others our lives. That young, punk ethos of Live life to the fullest, No consequences, Live for the moment. Then sometimes they do have consequences.



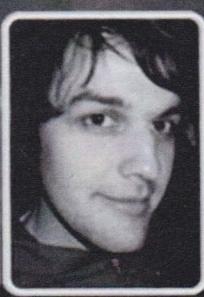
Jennifer Galbraith
Pleasant Grove, 21
Provo, 28



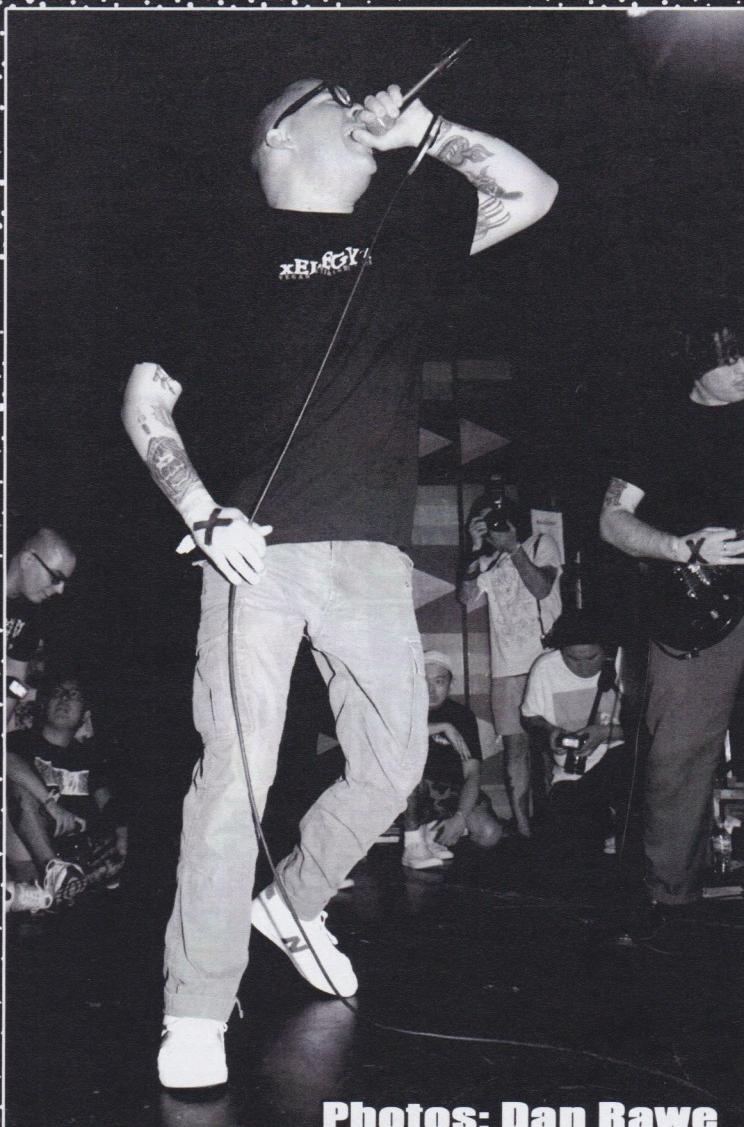
Scott McDonald
Provo, 28



Ariel Singer
Orem, 18

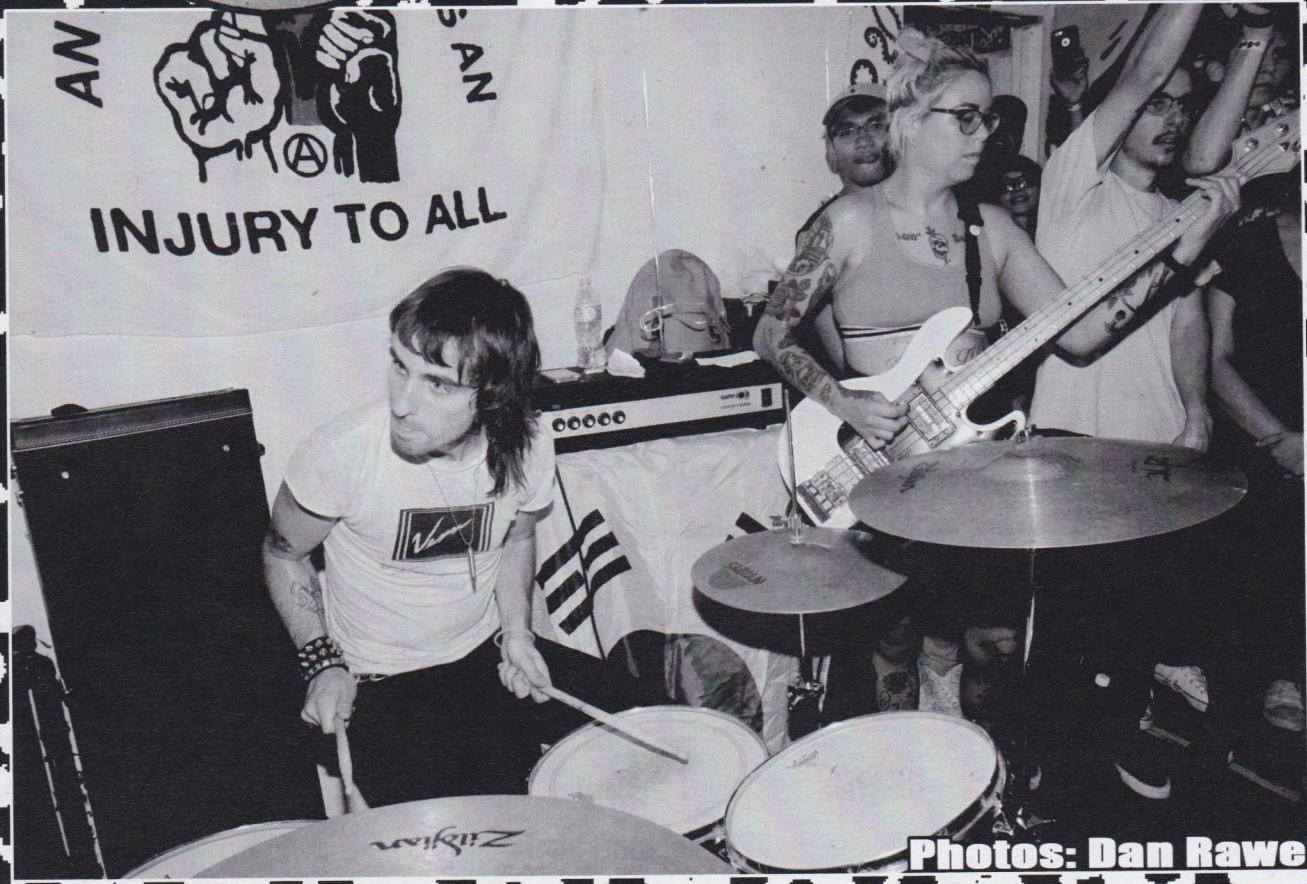
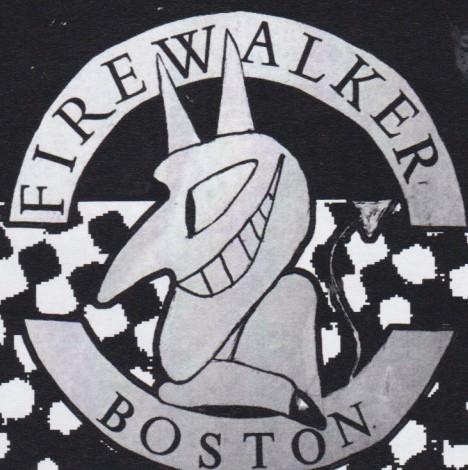


Blake Donner
Springville, 24



Photos: Dan Rawe





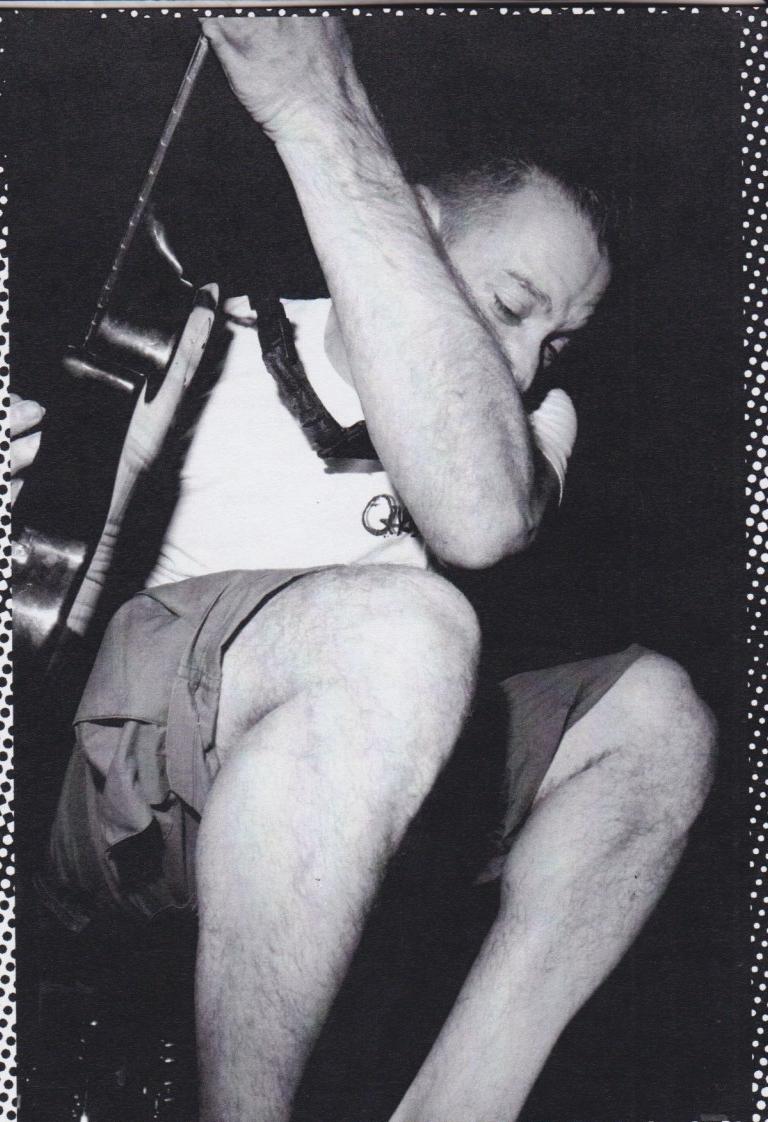
Photos: Dan Rawe



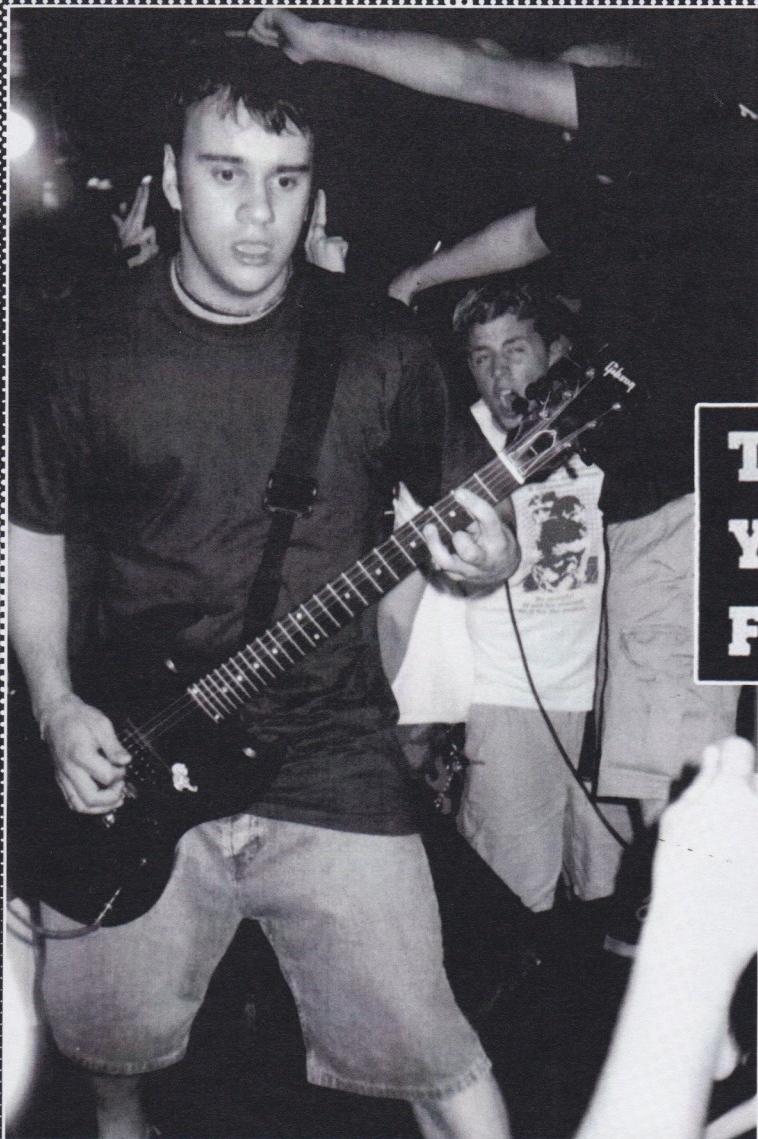
i'm glad it's you



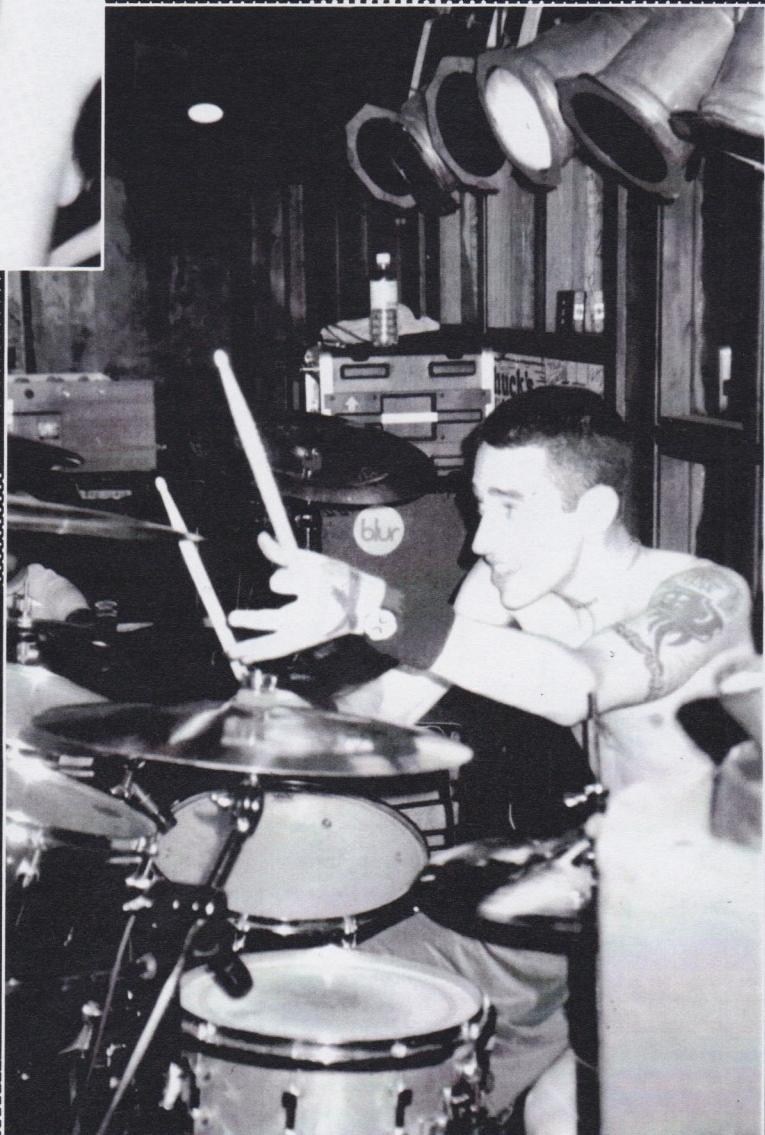
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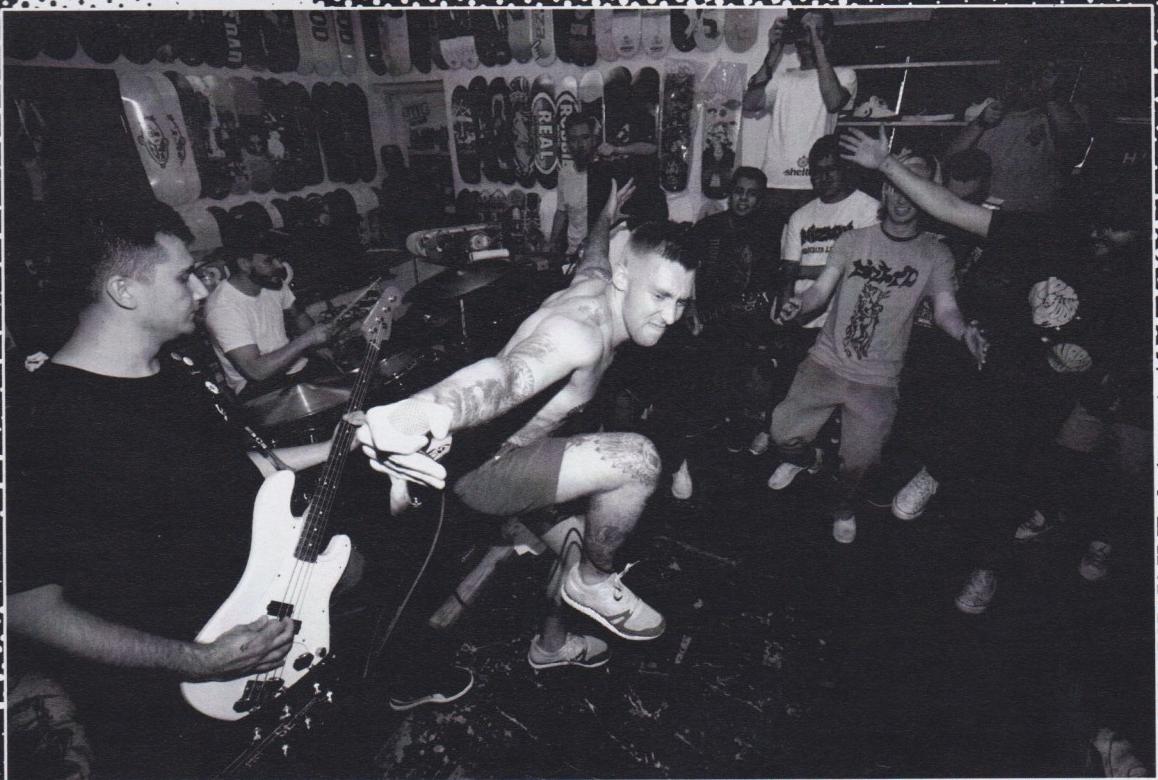
Photos: Dan Rawe



TEN
YARD
FIGHT



Photos: Ryan Canavan



WILD SIDE

Photos: Dan Rawe

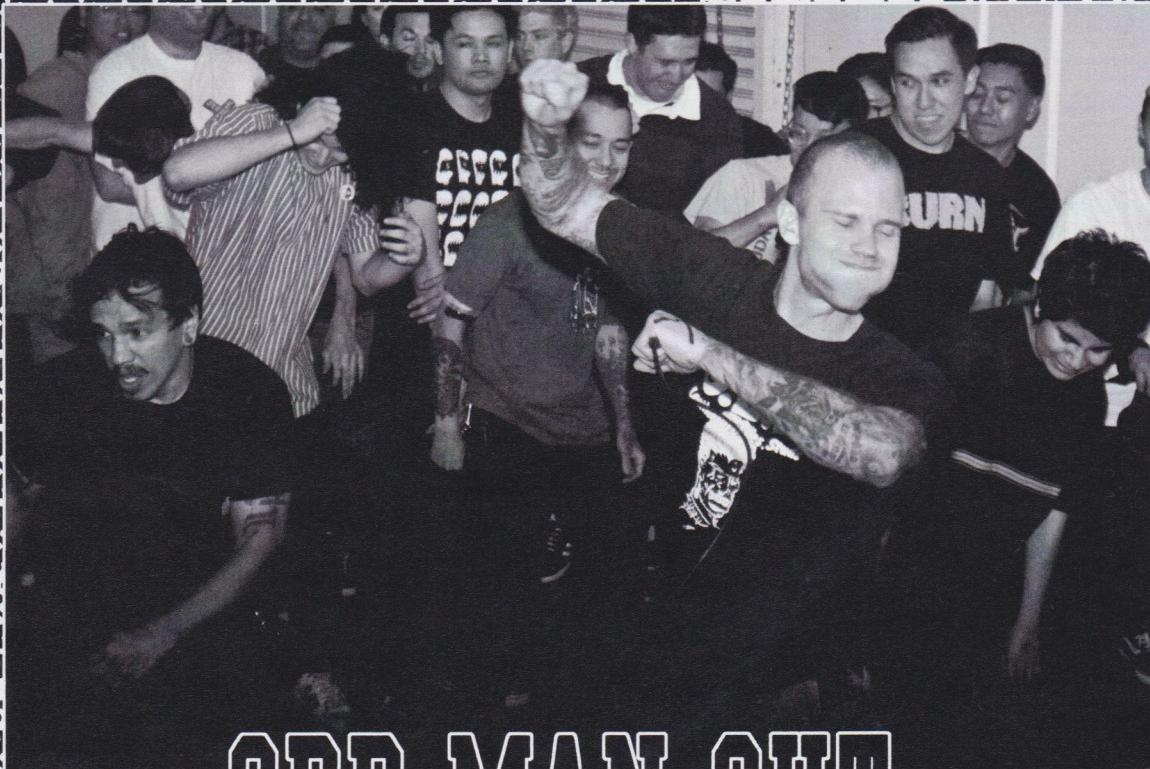


DRUG CONTROL
DRUG CONTROL
DRUG CONTROL

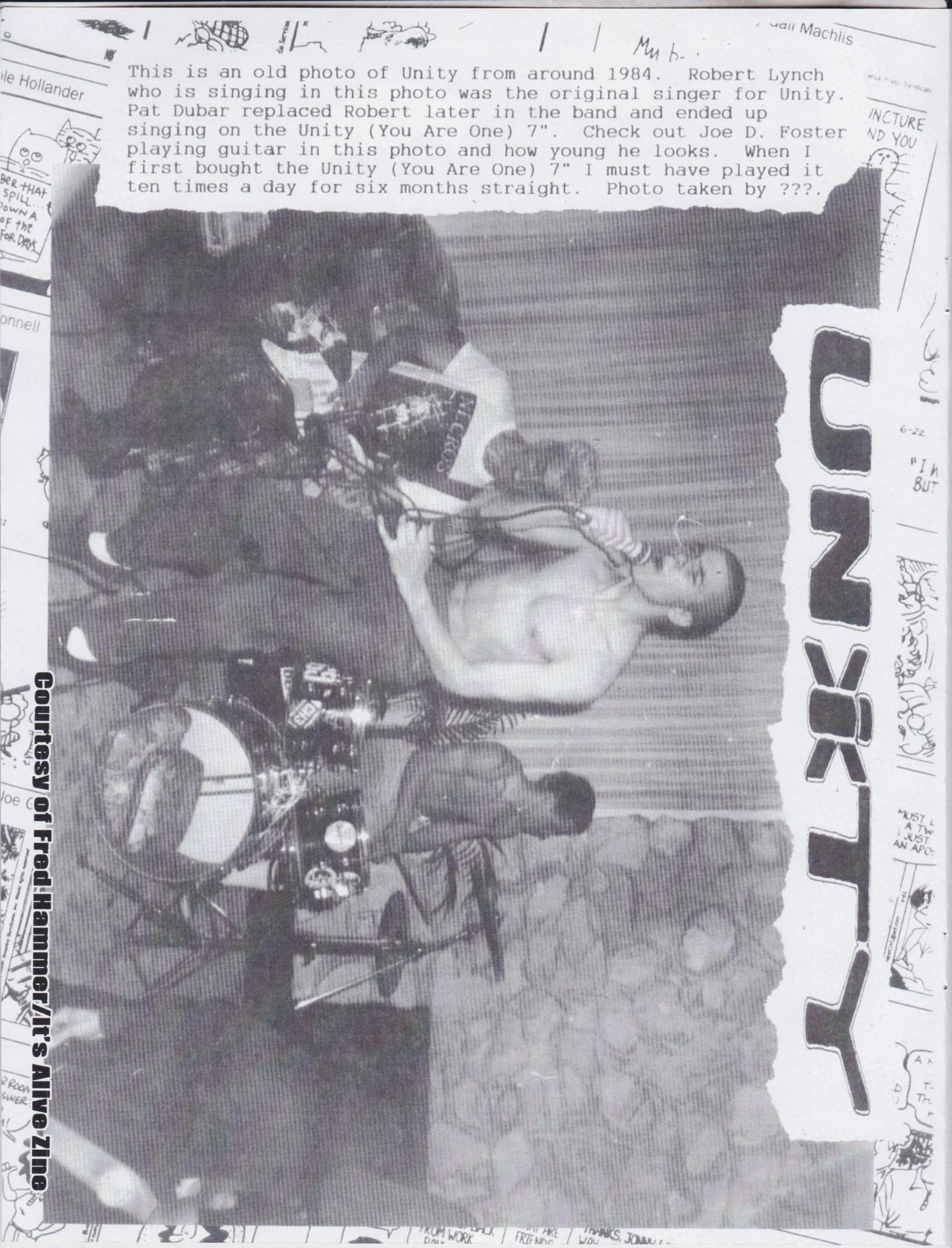




DEWSTRUCK



ODD MAN OUT



This is an old photo of Unity from around 1984. Robert Lynch who is singing in this photo was the original singer for Unity. Pat Dubar replaced Robert later in the band and ended up singing on the Unity (You Are One) 7". Check out Joe D. Foster playing guitar in this photo and how young he looks. When I first bought the Unity (You Are One) 7" I must have played it ten times a day for six months straight. Photo taken by ???.

My b.

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USA Photo Syndicate

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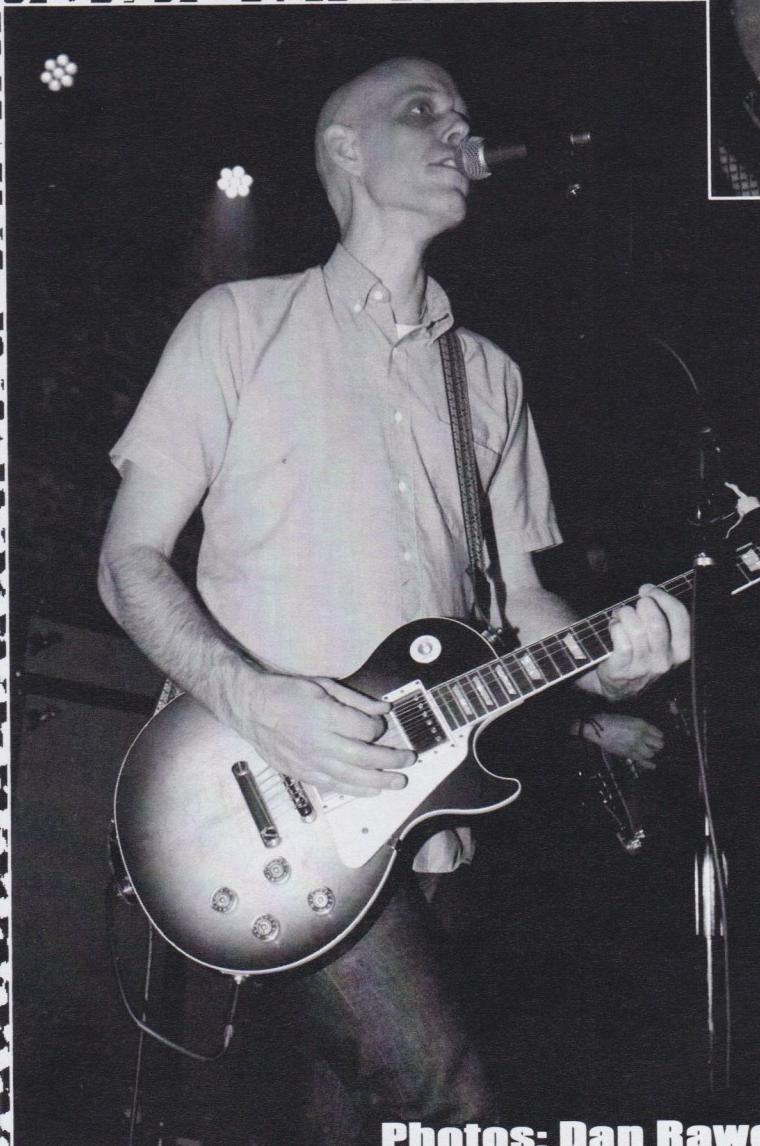
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racqui
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Photos: Dan Rawe



ILL REPUTE

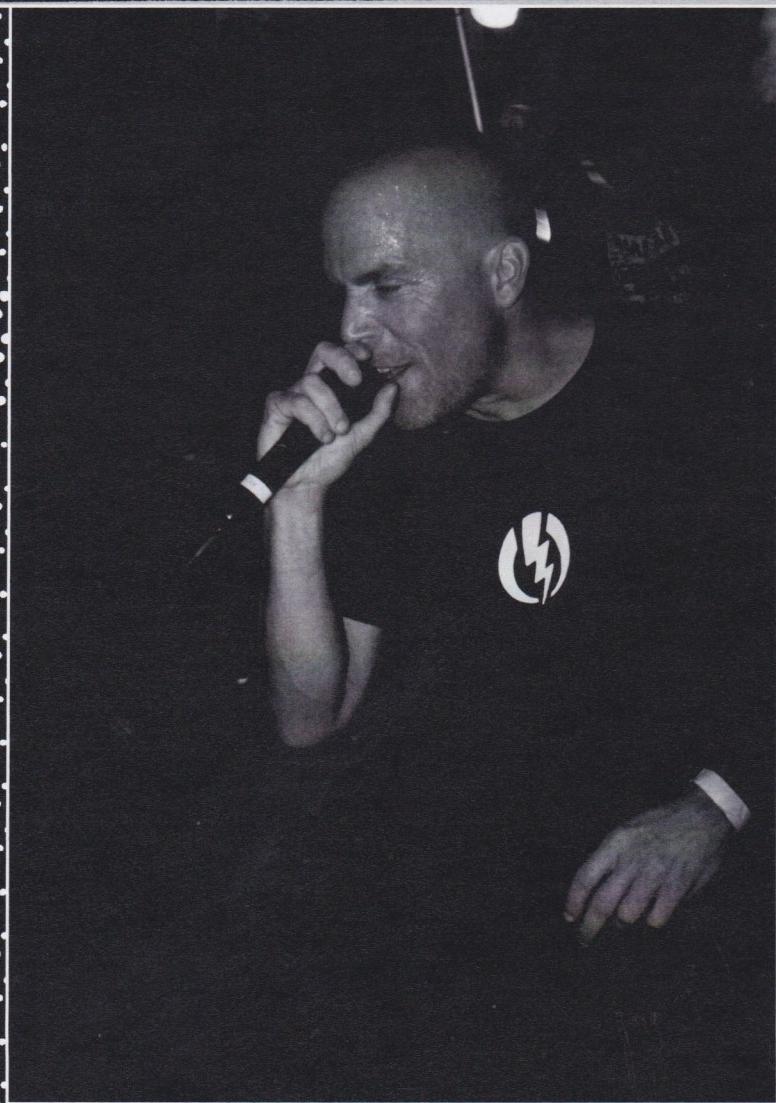


Photo: Fred Hammer

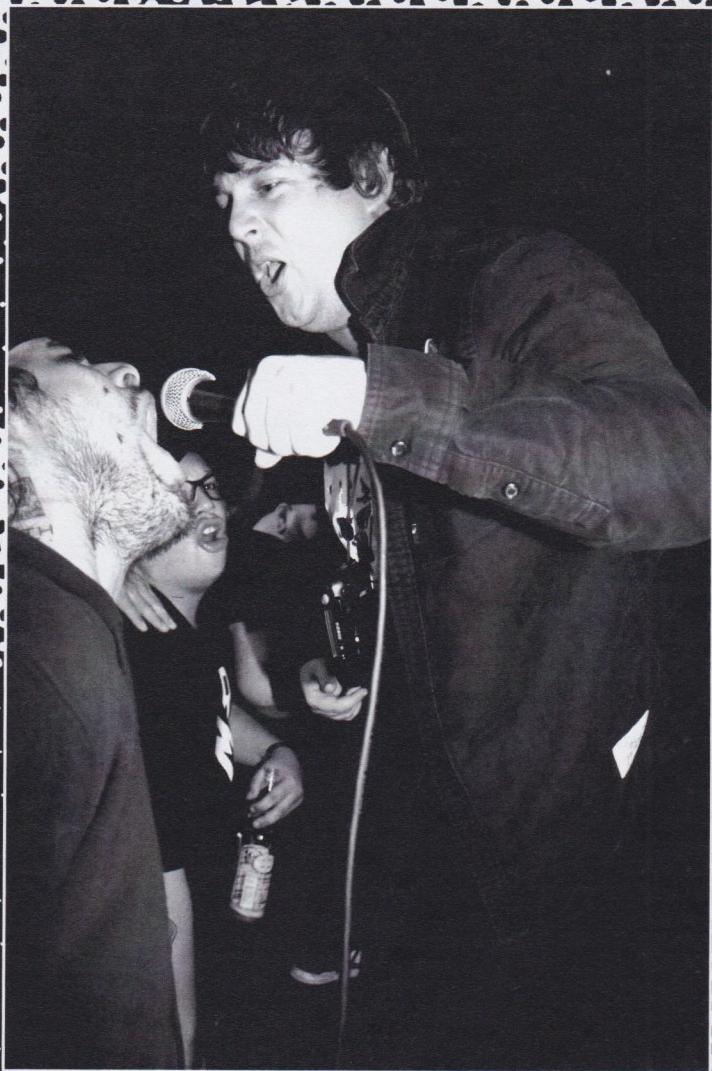
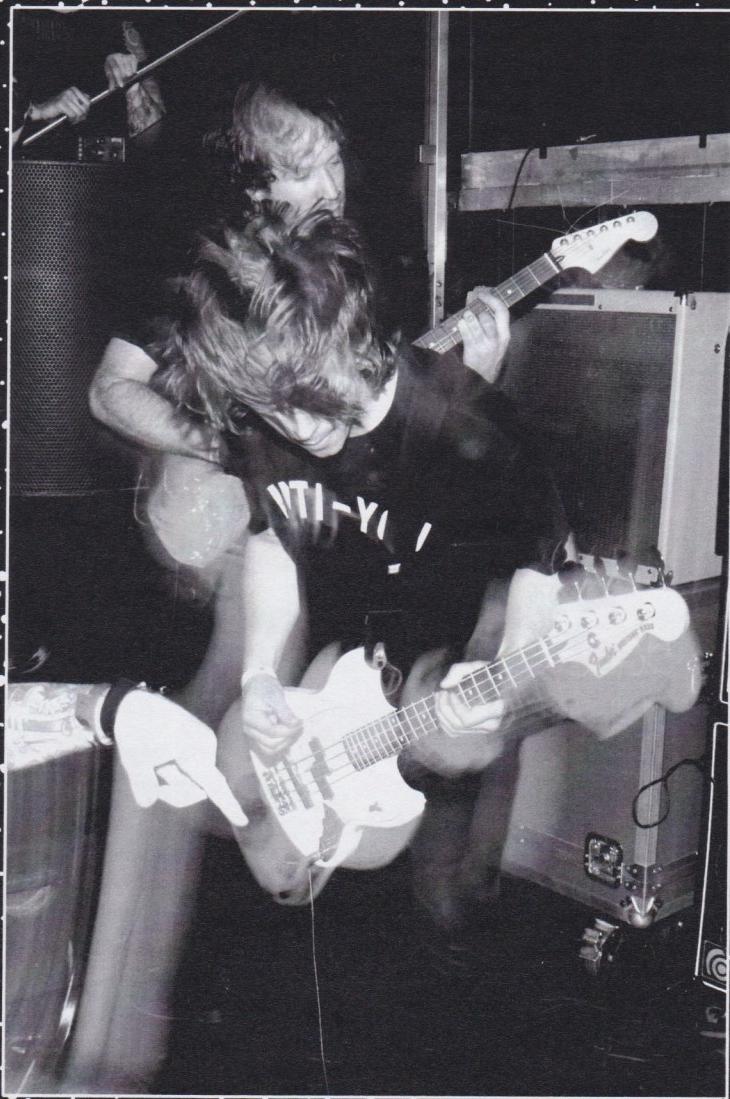


GAG

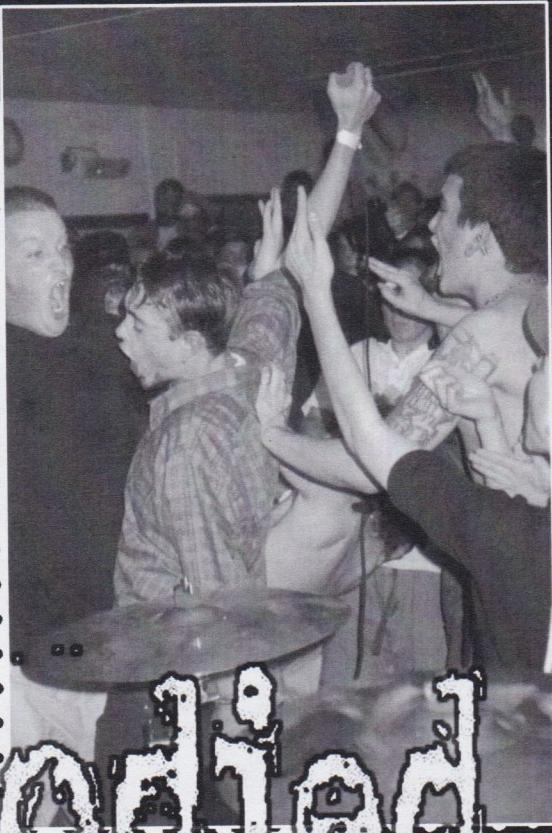
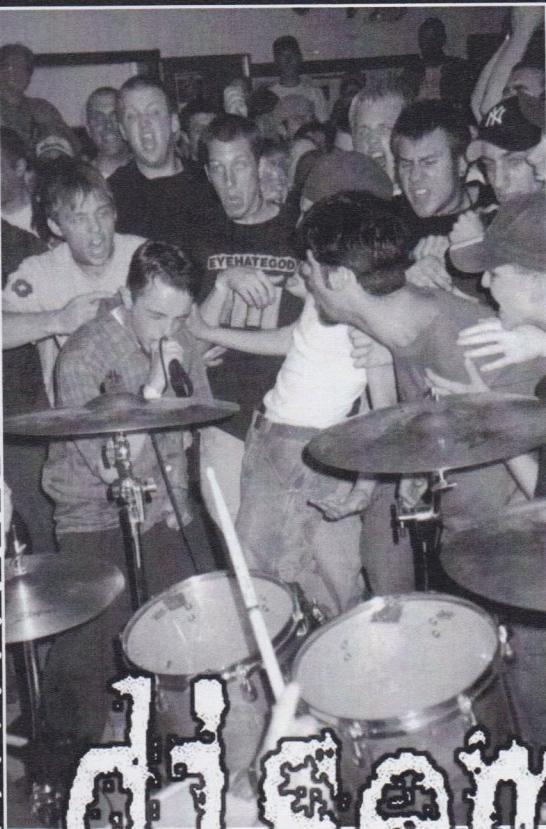


Photos: Dan Rawe

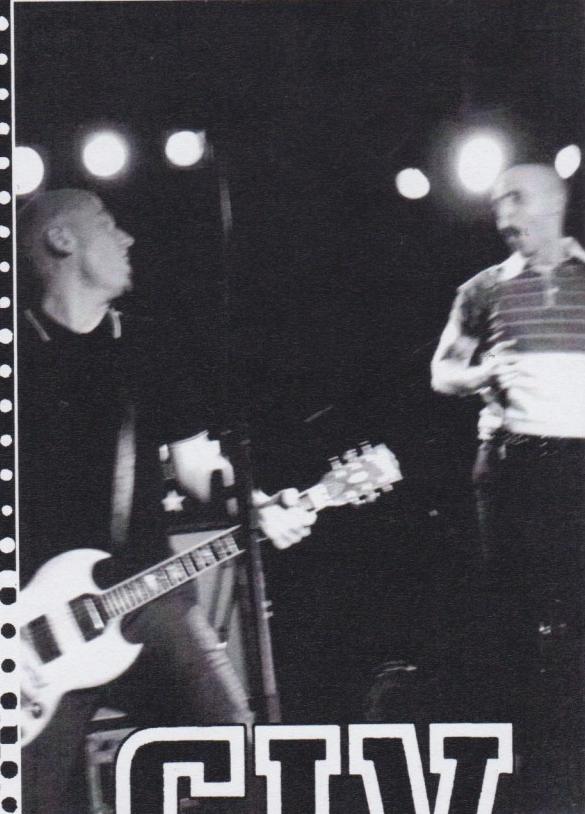
CULTURE ABUSE



Photos: Dan Rawe



disembodied



ANOTHER VICTIM

GIV

Photos: Ryan Canavan



DRAIN



ANNIHILATION TIME

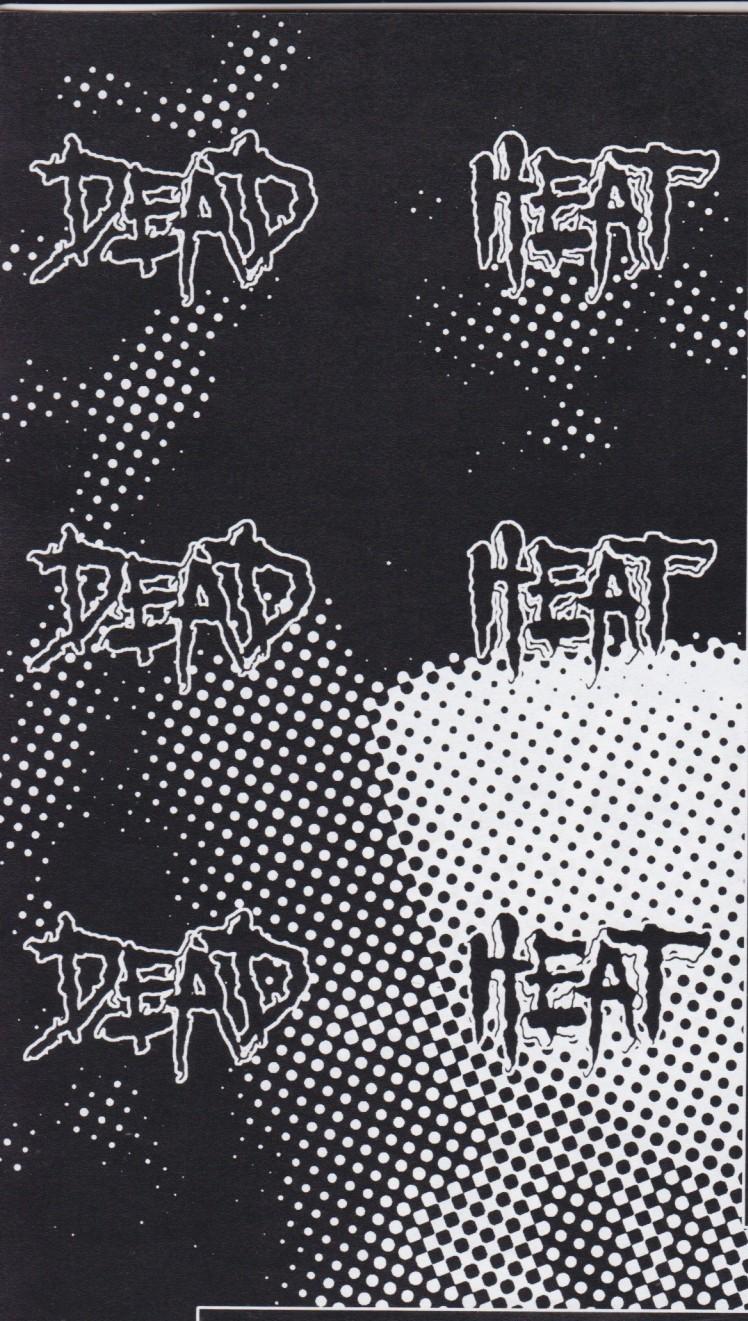
Photo: Marc Whitaker



Photo: Fred Hammer



ANNIHILATION TIME



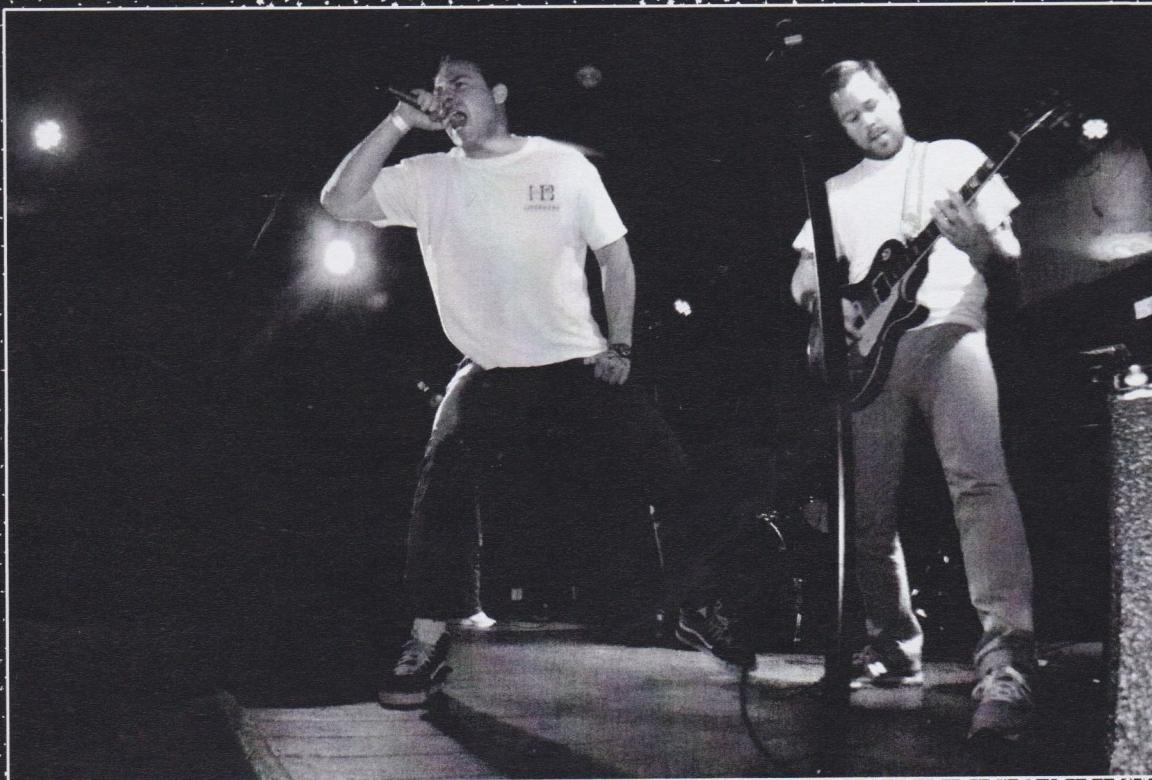
Photos: Dan Rawe





DISCREPANCY

O.C. STRAIGHT EDGE

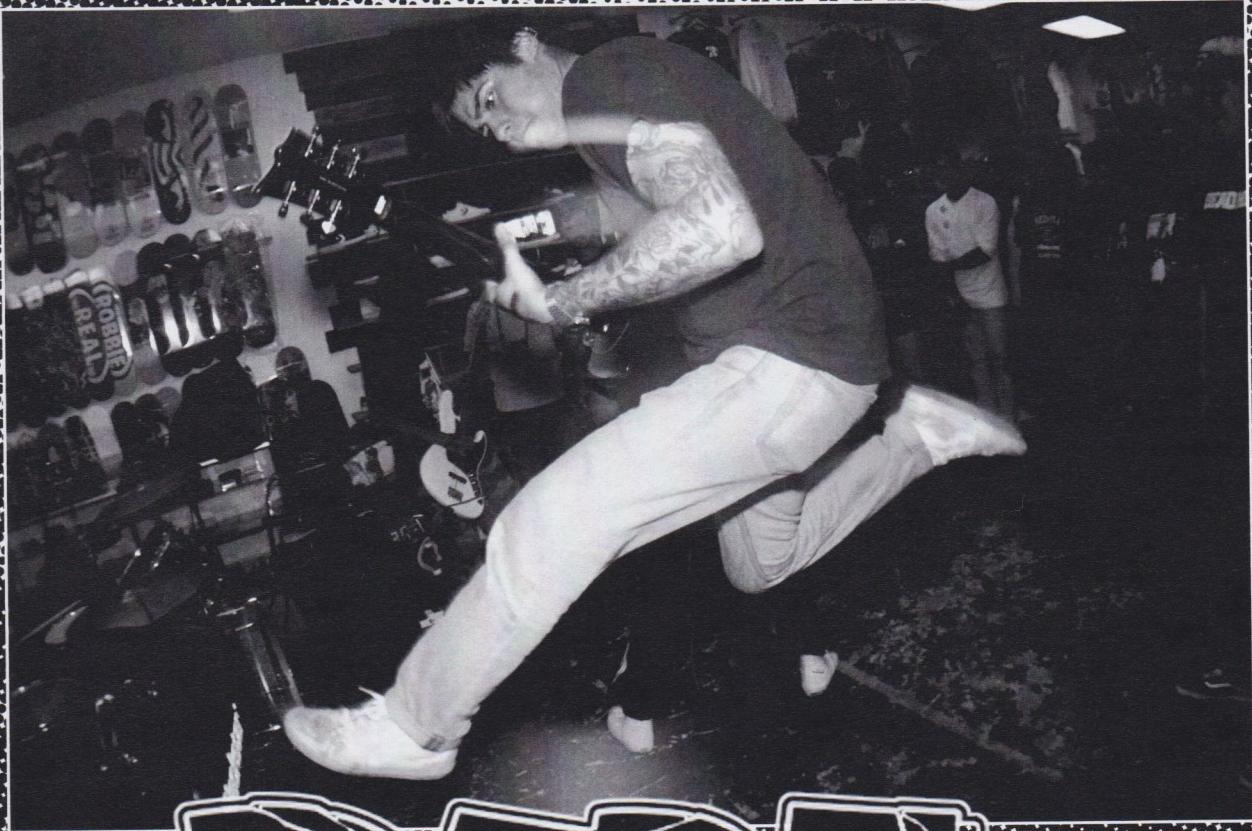


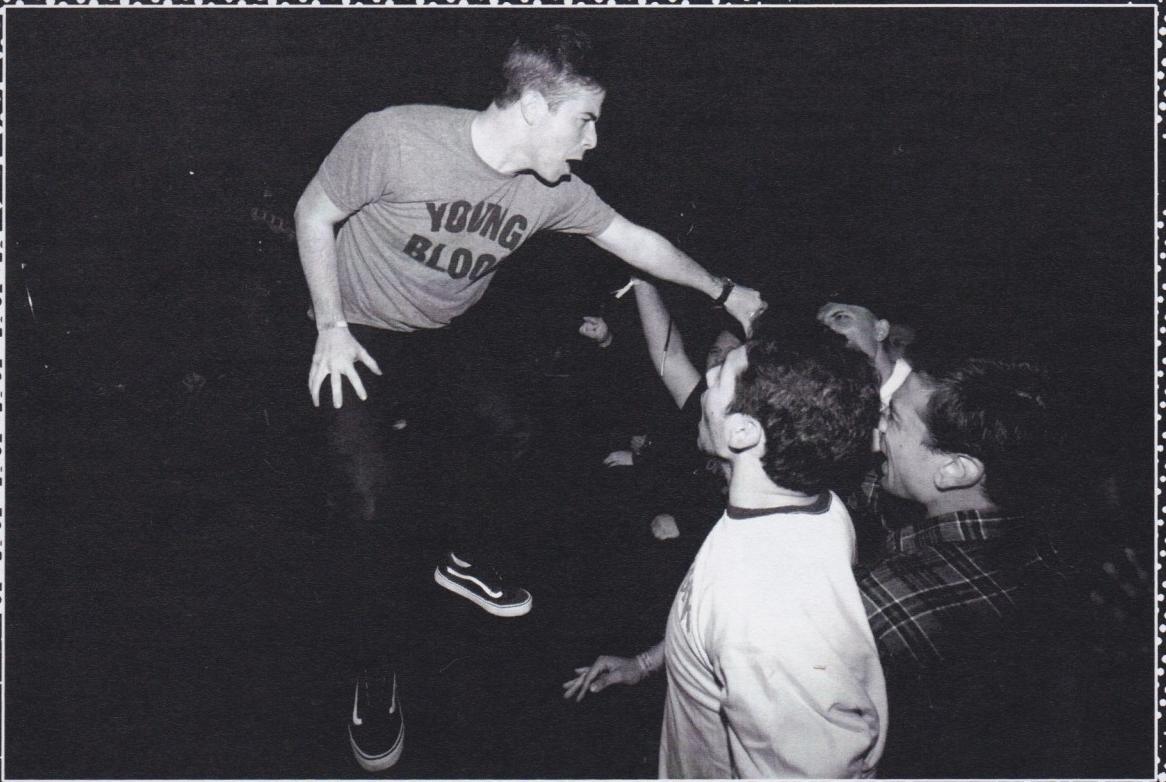


super force

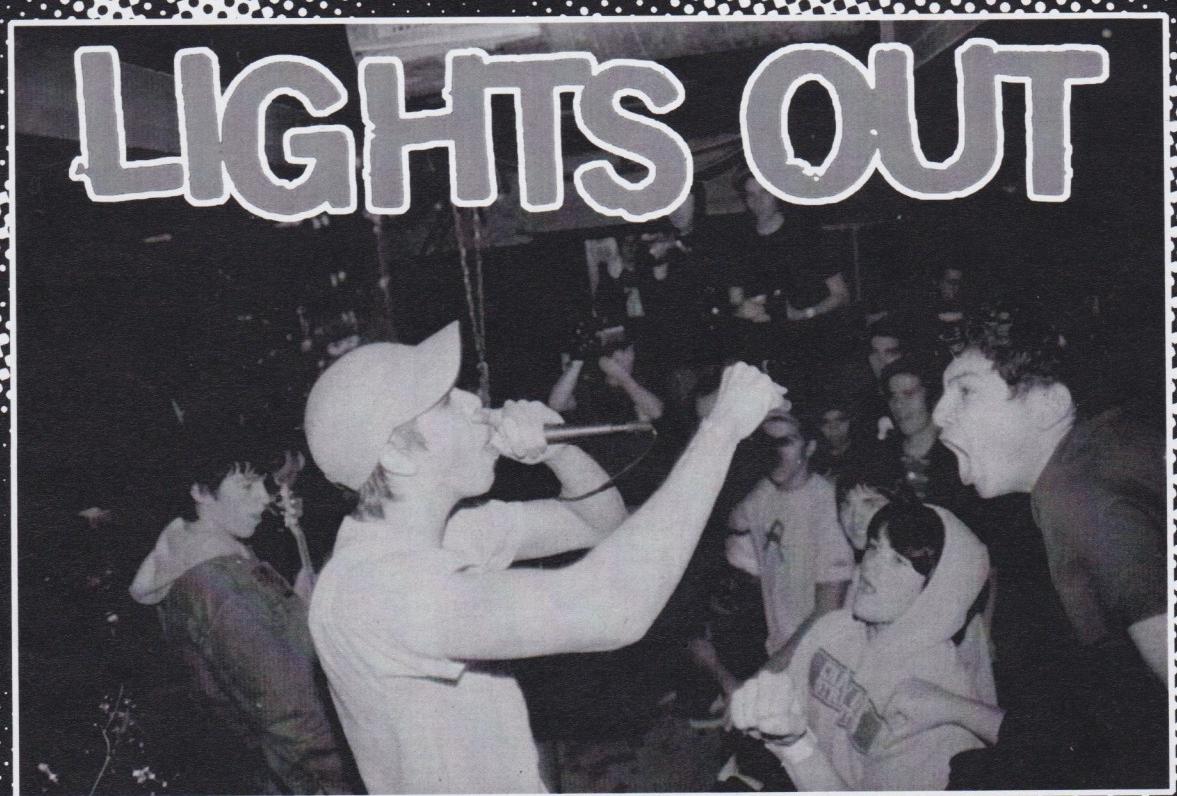
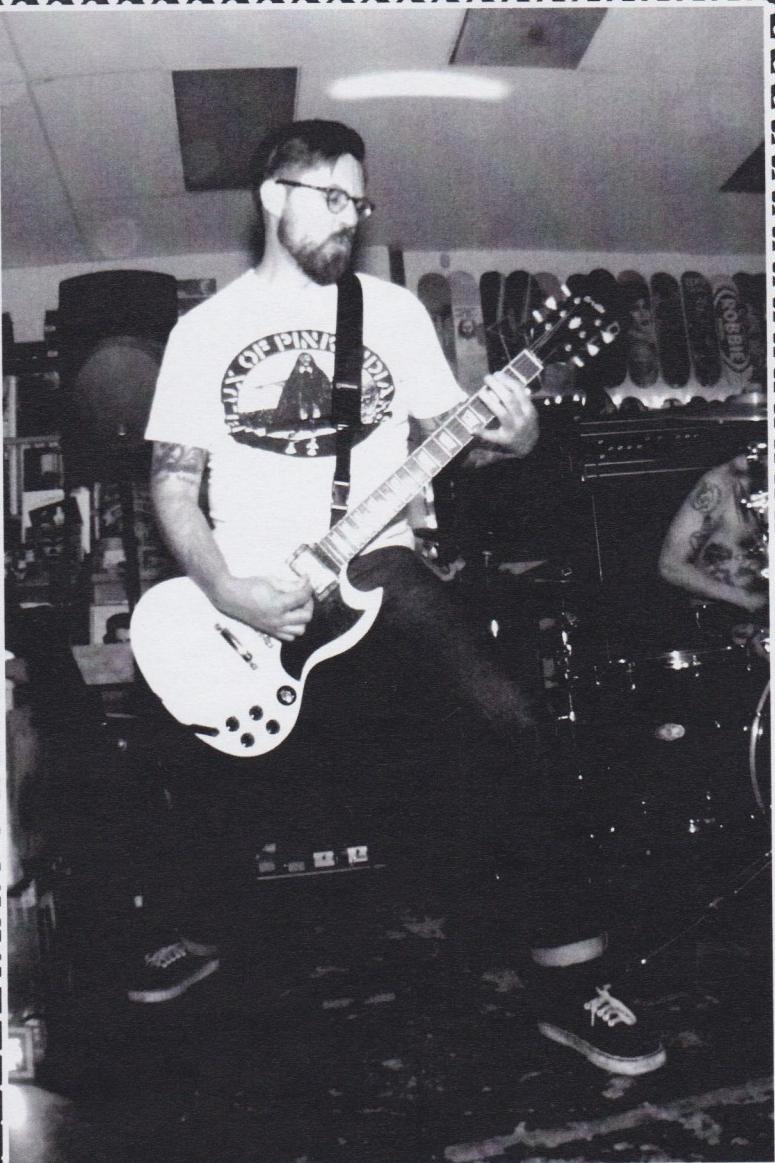
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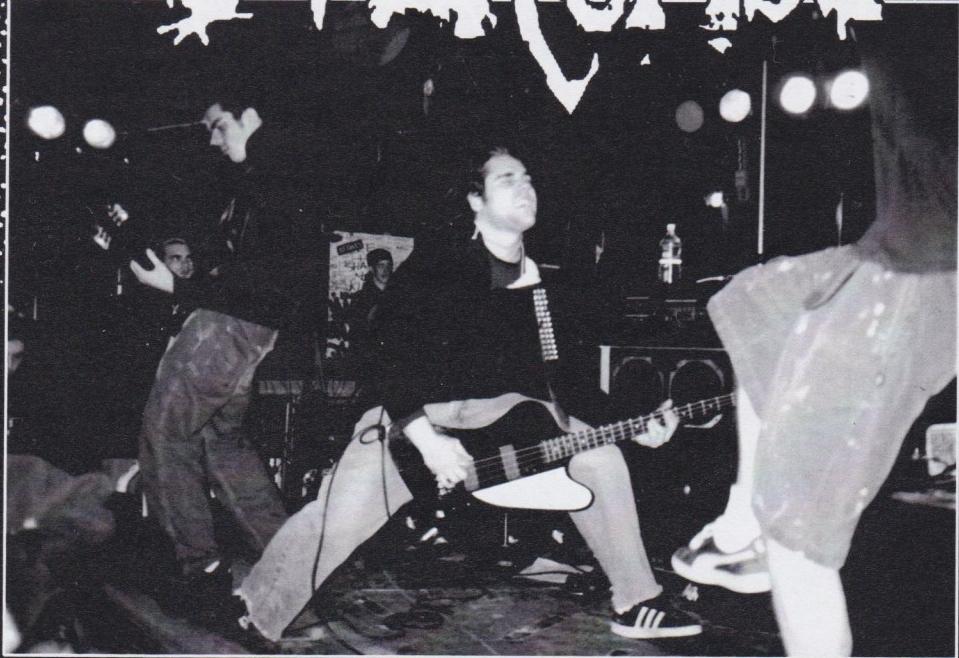






Photos: Dan Rawe





Photos: Ryan Canavan

BETRAYED

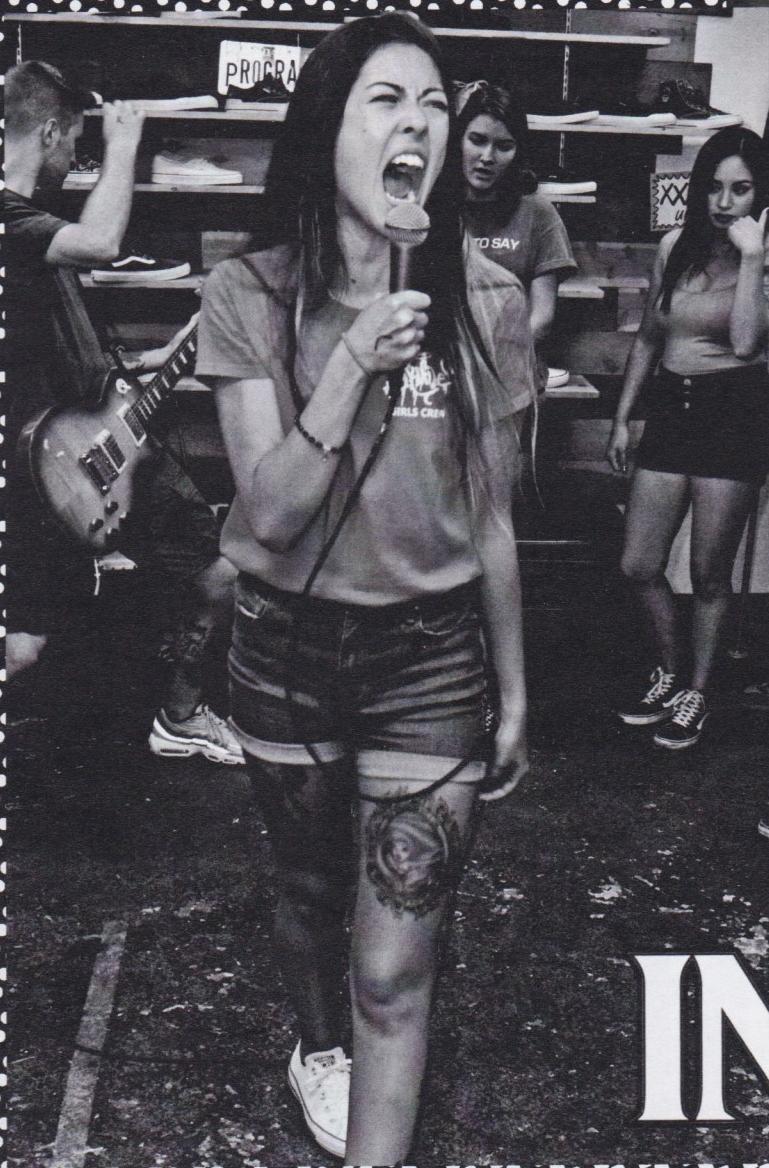


Photo: Fred Hammer

INITIATE

CUTTING THROUGH

Interview with Kyle (guitar) via Telephone

-Are you originally from the Northwest?

I am. I'm from Vancouver BC. I live in Portland now. I moved to the States 10 years ago.

-What was your introduction to hardcore?

It was probably D.R.I.- Dealing With It, on cassette. I got it thinking they were a metal band. But I didn't actually really find out about hardcore until about 10 years later, as a teenager, listening to like skate punk.

-So you were really young when you got that DRI tape...

Yeah. I had older cousins who were into metal, and I was impressionable and would listen to what they listened to, so I got into heavy metal in like first grade.

-Once you really got into hardcore, what was going on at the time, and did you find out about it through shows, or stumbling on another record?

I hung out with punk kids, and they sort of got into hardcore, and I was more curious about hardcore because it sounded like the bands had more of a message than the punk bands I was listening to at the time. Then I found out about Straight Edge and animal rights, the more political aspects of hardcore. And I think my first real hardcore show was in 96, and it was Strain, Trial, and One King Down. And that was actually in my hometown, which is about an hour outside of Vancouver.

(conversation goes off onto Trial...) Trial had a huge impact on me. And I remember they would draw so many kids in their heyday in the Seattle/Vancouver area. Everybody was into Trial, it was like a unifying band. And the fact that Greg had really great speeches and was able to explain the content of the songs was awesome, especially being a teenager and being at a show with the singer being so well spoken.

-The Northwest has always seemed kind of isolated in a sense. As if Brotherhood has to pioneer their own thing, and I'm sure not all tours are hitting the Northwest. Did you feel like that when you were young, or now that you live in Portland do you feel like that?

I definitely feel like that was a thing. like bands saying they're doing a west coast tour and just doing California. And when I was younger and booking shows in Vancouver, part of doing those shows was to attract touring bands to come. And for like 3-5 years it was super good. And I think because there was such well attended shows people were inspired to start new bands, a sort of boom in the 2000's in the Northwest.

-Portland isn't really known for being a hardcore town. Does that make it difficult for you guys?

It's a weird town because it's more known for its crust punk, D-beat, power violence, so if you're more of a traditional sounding hardcore band there isn't as much support for that sort of thing. But luckily there is some really cool people in town who try to have pretty diverse hardcore bills.



Photo: Dan Rawe

And since Portland is pretty open minded about checking out bands that might be outside of your particular wheelhouse it's cultivating an awareness for different styles.

-What previous bands did you play in?

As far as bands that toured I played in Blue Monday, Go It Alone, and Get The Most.

-Now that you're older has it become harder to play in bands?

I don't think so. Because I've always remained active. I never had an absence and then came back. And I remain active. The only difference now is going to a show and realizing some of the people there are half your age, but you're all there for the same reason. And sometimes you can relate better to someone at a show who is 16, than to someone your own age who isn't into hardcore. And in that way it transcends generations.

-What about in terms of having enough time to do stuff, and having more responsibilities as an adult which pull you in other directions. Is it more difficult now than in 2005?

It's tough to say, because it was harder when we were younger because we had no money. We were like quitting our jobs to go on tour, every tour we broke down and had to pay for van repairs, and it was really tough. And now that we're older we have grown up responsibilities; some of us are married and have kids, or a mortgage, so in that respect it's different. But being a little more grown up you can be a little more mature with your finances. Like going to Europe, it wasn't that hard, cause we knew we wanted to do it so we just budgeted.

-Had you toured Europe with your previous bands?

Yeah, I think this was my fourth time. This past trip was the first trip with Cutting Through, but I'd been in 2009 with Get The Most, 2006 with Go It Alone, and 2005 with Blue Monday.

-In general how did this tour go?

It was really fun. We went with friends of ours in Appraise from Barcelona. I met the singer, Gabby, on my first European tour and we developed a friendship. He started Appraise in 2012, and it was right up my alley so I knew if we ever went to Europe with Cutting Through that I wanted to do it with them rather than bringing another band from the states, it'd be fun to tour with another band from Europe. It had a different feel because they knew the lay of the land a little more, and we made them drive basically the whole time.

-I've heard funny stories from people who have come back from Europe. About the little differences in the scene over there, whether it be the way they mosh or



the type of merch bands print. Did you notice anything like that?

It's funny cause you think you're gonna see stuff like that, cause you're so far away, but the kids are into the exact same things that kids are back home. One thing that's kinda strange, people will ask for vinyl, but say "weenyl", I noticed that the first time I went to Germany. One of the only other differences is most of the shows are in bars, and often you can smoke in bars.

-The dominant style of hardcore right now seems to be a heavier, mosh oriented style; the brand of hardcore you guys play isn't the most popular right now. How would you compare the response you guys get over here versus what you experienced over there?

I know what you're saying, because the style of hardcore we play really isn't popular anywhere, but it doesn't mean that its not fun to be a part of it. It seems like wherever you go there is a handful of people who are into record collecting, they're into old bands and talking about classic Rev stuff and Wishingwell. It's more nerdy. It's really easy to be 16 and go to a show and see a mosh-metal band and see people kicking the shit out of each other in the pit and find a connection with that, and think, "wow, that's really fun." And on the other side of the coin you see these grumpy 40 year olds who had to get a babysitter to come to the show, and they might be enjoying themselves but they have their arms crossed and they're in the back of the room, and they might get \$50 worth of merch and they're super satisfied. It's a strange thing being involved in this style of hardcore because it's just a little different, but it still has the same passion and intensity and energy as the other styles, just in a different form.

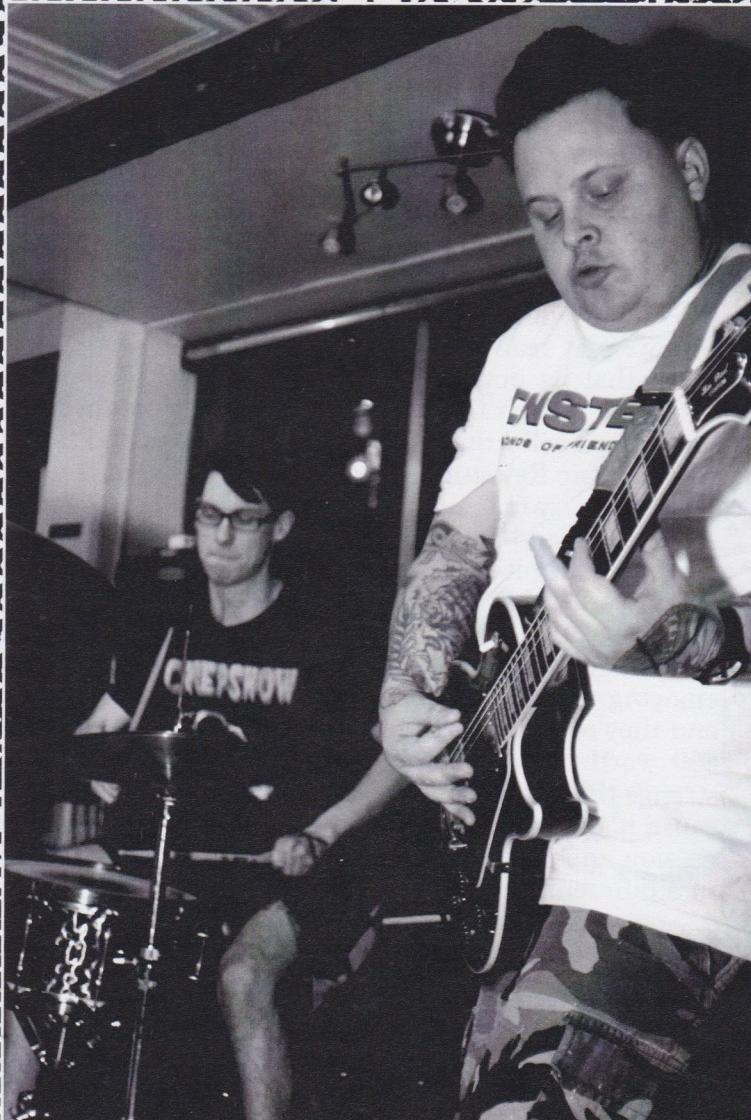
-Yeah. It looks like kids aren't as interested in sing-alongs, and participation at shows is more centered around dancing. And I can't help but think that's because so much of music is consumed through bandcamp and spotify, and since we aren't always getting the physical format and we're not looking at an

insert with lyrics that we are going to see less kids engaging with the lyrics and less sing alongs etc., and more traditional styles of hardcore may not appeal to younger kids because they don't know how to interact with it.

I think it has a lot to do with how much content we are used to consuming. When you were young there might be a record you're looking forward to for months, and you take it home and study the layout and read all the lyrics and you wait for them to come to town and you are super excited. And now a band is releasing a new demo on bandcamp every couple weeks; you might not even get a physical copy, you listen to it once or twice, and you might remember it or you might totally forget. We're not consuming music like we used to. And I think releasing music physically is really important, so I want to make sure that whatever band I'm in we continue to release stuff on vinyl or tape or what have you.

-How did you guys get hooked up with New Age records; did Mike hit you guys up, did you send him a tape...?

I think the Drug Control guys were talking to Mike Hartsfield, and they mentioned us as band that he should check out. And then I got to talking with Mike. He offered to do a record and I was really stoked on the idea because New Age is such a classic label. He's pretty consistently put stuff out all through the 90's and 2000's, but especially right now



now he's been putting a lot of time and energy into it and I'm really happy that he was willing to work with us.

-You guys have a new EP coming out right?

Yeah. It just came out. Our new record is called "Empathy", it's a 4 song 7". 3 fast songs and a slower song.

-As a guitar player who do you think is a really good songwriter?

I've always looked up to Todd Jones of Carry On and Nails. I think he understands the power of the hook. He definitely writes songs that have a lasting impression, whether it's a really prominent chorus or a slower part that's really catchy. He's really aware of how to write a good song, he knows how to cut the fat and bring in just the parts that you need. Another person I would say is Mark Palm, who was the singer of Go It Alone. I think he is a really talented songwriter. Right now he is focusing on his band Supercrush, they're sort of a dream pop/shoegaze band. He is a devout musician and spends a lot of time working on music, and he is a guy who knows how to write a really good hook. Super Crush was a project I think but now it has a full line up and they're touring more.

-As a total package, visually, performance, graphic design, etc... which bands were able to bring it all together and fire on all cylinders?

Easy answer for me is Youth Of Today, I don't know if that's an obvious answer...

-It's the safe answer...

I think they just had it all, they were able to carve out their own thing. They were inspired by SSD and 7 Seconds, but they developed their own thing which was maybe a departure from the negative, angry vibe at the time, and tried to bring a more positive aspect to hardcore. But they had it all: layouts were flawless, t-shirts, even their appearance was awesome. As a person who didn't wear bondage pants and a Mohawk, I felt like I had a connection with Youth of Today cause they were kids from the suburbs.

-Which bands post-1990...

I think Earth Crisis would be a band to consider. They were similar to YoT in that they had to carve out their own vibe. And so many people tried to tell them what they did was ridiculous or stupid, but they still pushed their message of animal liberation and environmentalism. They had their style and message all figured out and they stuck to it. And even now, it's the same guys and they haven't compromised on their message, I definitely respect them for that.

(conversation takes a diversion into YoT, remastering, re-releases, Bold, etc...)

-*What album still gets you finger pointing and singing along?*

Hmm, I should pick something other than Youth of Today...

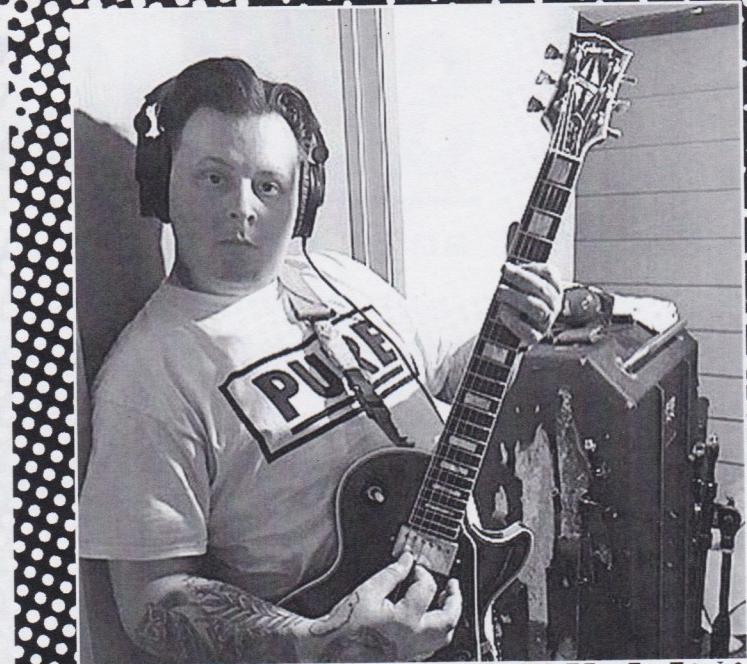
-*(both laugh) there has been a few YoT references so even if you don't pick them, I think that people will know that they were you're first choice...*

I might go with Minor Threat, tried and true. Started listening to them in probably 8th grade. It's a band that never fails to get you riled up. They never released a bad song. Start to finish flawless discography. And something that I think they had which their friends and colleagues didn't have was good recording. So those songs have so much power cause you can hear all the instruments crystal clear. And a lot of the themes in those songs are still relevant now.

-*What record will get you moshing in your living room?*

Hmm, well I wouldn't want to hurt my back... you know, probably Agnostic Front- United Blood. That's about as simple as it gets; right to the point, fast songs with really good dance parts.

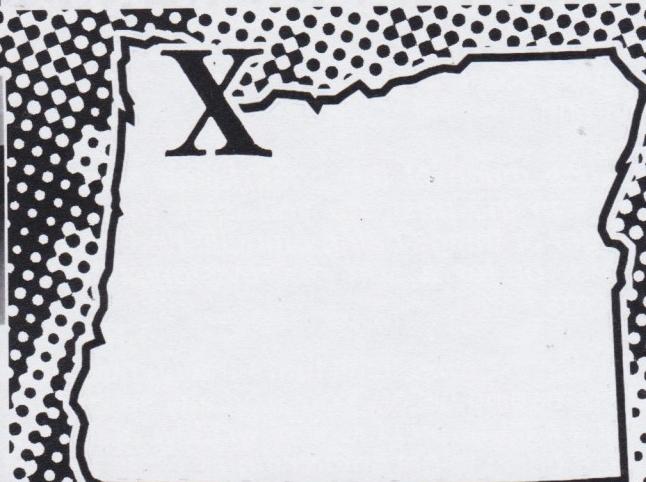
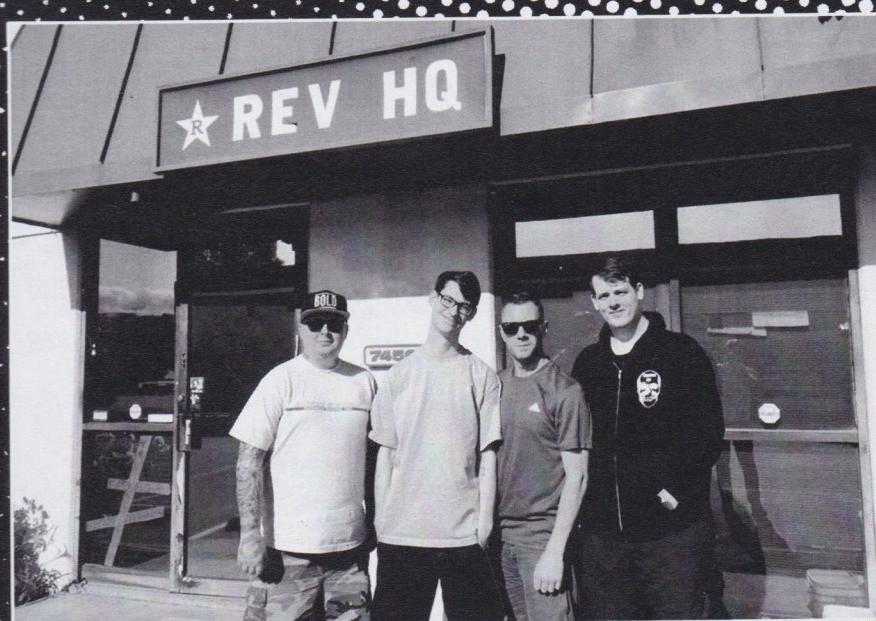
-*On tour, what type of guy are you: are you the tour dad keeping everyone on schedule, do you get grumpy, do you have all the inside local knowledge and know the good places to eat...?*



I've probably cultivated the tour dad persona, trying to make sure everyone gets in the van at the right time, trying to make sure people don't go venturing off when they need to be at the venue. Especially in the current band I'm in now, we have a drummer who is 13 or 14 years younger so we have to keep him on a short leash or he might get lost. But I'm definitely the quiet guy, I like to sit in the back of the van, and after the show I like to chill out and be quiet, I'm not necessarily the guy who proposes we take a detour and go cliff diving.

-*Any last words?*

Thanks for the interview, I really appreciate it. And thanks for doing a zine, I look forward to reading it, it's a lost art and I sincerely appreciate anyone still involved in doing them.



STRAIGHT×EDGE

an interview with author Tony Rettman

I called up Tony and we talked on the phone for about 30 minutes. Right before the conversation ended I realized that i hadn't been recording the conversation, but I felt too embarrassed to tell him. The next morning Tony texted me to ask if I got what i needed and i came clean. We decided to redo the interview through email. So this is the second attempt. Special thanks to Tony for basically doing the same interview twice.

-What is it about Straight Edge specifically that makes it nearly impossible for an outsider to comprehend (let alone write about)?

I think for some people, the concept of Straight Edge is fundamentalist and rigid, so they immediately are turned off of it because they think they are being told what to do or not to do. There's an immediate prejudice; at least that's the vibe I've received from a good amount of people. So, in punk, if someone is not into Straight Edge, this seems to be the angle they come from when they let their opinion be known about it. I know from the comments left on the social media platforms for the book it's the same now as it was when I was in high school 30 years ago. But both inside and outside of punk, it's alien and impenetrable to a good amount of people.

Outside observations of subcultures in mainstream magazines or websites are usually whack, but it's not really the journalists' fault most of the time. It's usually just someone trying to file their article by the deadline, so they just stitch something together in a "Mad Libs" style. Sometimes people can't wrap their heads around the temporary nature of most journalism these days. Also, I don't think the journalist is aware they are writing about a music scene containing the most nitpicky people on earth.

- Since much of the book takes place 20-35+ years in the past, do you think there is much danger or things being embellished, misremembered, or for a sort of "revisionist history" to emerge?

I don't know, I think that's the gamble you take when reading history books on any subject matter. I think right now is the final window of time where you're going to get something as close to the truth from the people part of the punk scene from the early 80s and forward. Most of the ones from the first part of the story are still sharp and remember a lot of things and everyone after that is eager to be heard. You have a good cross-section of groups to work with right now.

There's a lot of people from punk who really have the "Al Bundy Syndrome" when it comes to their time in the scene. Their band played to 1000s of people, they won every fight, etc. I have a pretty good gauge for that stuff by this point, so when someone spins me a ridiculous yarn on a fight or a show or something, I just don't pay it any mind. I always think of the lyric from the Agnostic Front song "Strength": "No one hands you the truth." I think it's up to the individual on what they want to believe.

- A lot of old stories get told and retold, often from an extremely biased perspective, with the stories taking on an a role of folklore almost. Without outside, 3rd party corroborating evidence, does hardcore/Straight Edge have a history, or just a generally accepted mythology ?

A little of both, maybe? There are moments I remember from certain shows that are just moments really, nothing special. But in hindsight, it had an impact on both the music scene and myself. Sometimes you need that space in time to realize the importance of some things. But then I've read certain books or articles about shows I was at and I know its 100% bullshit. And that's where I get queasy wondering what's fact and what's fiction in pretty much every history or biography I've ever read; be it about music or radical politics or science fiction authors. In the end, I think history is chosen by the reader. You decide what you want to believe and not believe. People have to use their discretion on what to take in I think. Easier said than done, I suppose. But that's what I think.

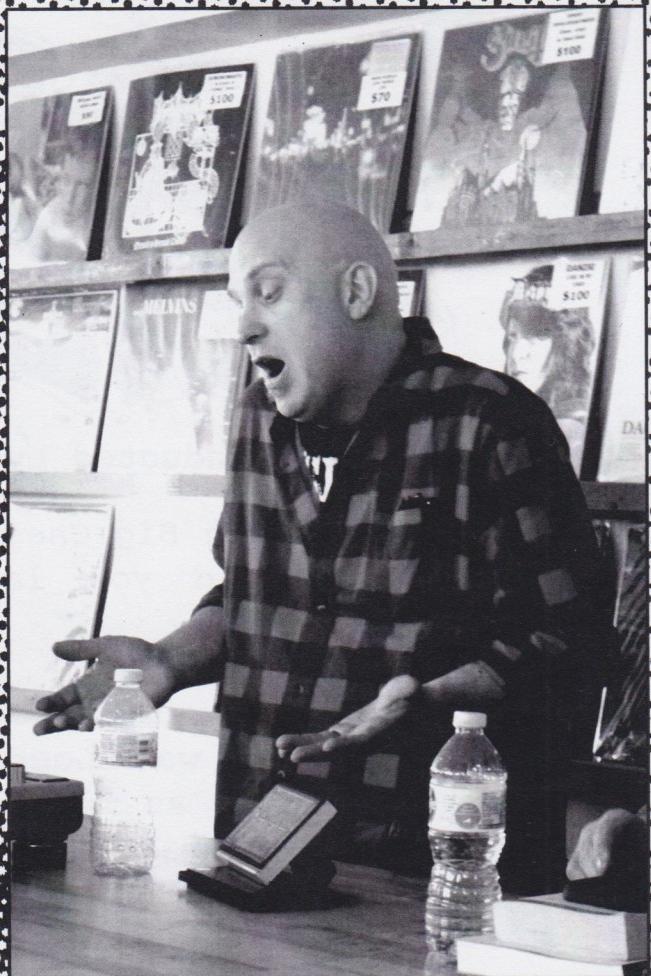
- You said that there was a period between the mid '90s-early 2000s that you weren't as involved and knowledgeable about. Was there anything that you were turned onto or revised during the writing of the book that you had a new appreciation for?

In doing my research, discovering the music of Far From Breaking, Follow Through and Carry On was cool. I only knew them by name before writing the book. I couldn't stand that final Insted LP, What We Believe when it first came out. It just seemed very forced and cheesy to me. But I think it might

have been the most listened to album during the writing of the book. I now take it as a very tight and clean record; perhaps the last true statement from the legit late 80's Straight Edge scene. But having said all that, the lyrics are still pretty goofy. I went back and listened to Earth Crisis. They still do not appeal to me, but I can now understand why kids went nuts for them at the time and why they made an impact on the Straight Edge scene. It was something new on all levels and not a rehash of anything done before.

- *Does it seem strange now that some show you were at in the 80's might be on some kids list of "places I'd go if I had a time machine", or a shirt you had is the holy grail of some collector?*

Yes, but that's because I'm taking it in from my own personal perspective. There were some shows I look back on as being pretty life-affirming, but in reality, it was just a gathering of young people. There were shirts I really loved, but they were just articles of clothing covering my unattractive upper torso. It's the spin of allure the person who wasn't there puts on the era or t-shirt that makes it what is, really. But I am just as guilty when I encounter people older than me who saw Negative Approach or saw some legendary Grateful Dead show.



- *Do you think the book would have turned out any different if you were still Straight Edge?*

Honestly, it probably would have been a better book. If someone who actually stuck with the lifestyle and scene had tried their hand at it - someone like Tim McMahon for example - they would have been able to write about the trajectory of Straight Edge with the confidence I really don't have when it comes to the time frame of the late 90's and the early 2000's. There were some moments from that era where I found myself desperately groping for what was vital to cover. In hindsight, maybe I should have taken on a co-author to help me through it all. But at this point in time, what's done is done. All I can do is hope I didn't make too big of a fool of myself and that people enjoyed reading the book.



Photos: Dan Rawe

www.bazillionpoints.com

BIG CHEESE

Interview conducted by Ed Crooks of www.droidxrage.com

-What's going on with Big Cheese right now, when did you last play?

Yo! Our last show was Madrid, Spain. Before that was Leeds. We're trying to play as much as possible now the 7" is out.

-Let's start at the beginning, where are you guys from and when did you start practicing etc, Who plays what?

Meg (guitar) and Alex (drums) are from London, myself (vocals) from Huddersfield, Louis (guitar is from Nottingham and Anth (bass) is from Durham. We are pretty much based in Leeds. We started playing together around 2016 after Meg had written a couple songs in our bedroom and decided to put the band together shortly thereafter.

-How much material do you have right now?

The Sports Day demo came out in November 2016, we did a limited self-release of 50 tapes. We also have the Aggravated Mopery

7" out on QCHQ. We also just recorded a new track Tower To The Sun for upcoming US tape compilation which should be out soon...

Whilst recording the comp track we also recorded a live set WNYU style with Ola down in London. You can find that online and buy the tape for that on QCHQ site too- we're all sold out!!!



-Have you Guys had a bit of a following from the start? And do you think your music is well received to new listeners when you play out?

I don't think it really took off until after a while as I'm not sure a demo seems to captivate people as much these days. I also think you have to really keep the momentum up (shows, merch etc.) otherwise people tire and move on pretty quickly. When we play locally it's difficult to tell whether it's well received as its all our friends but when we've played away or bigger shows, it's popped off most times which is sick.

-What other bands do you guys play in?

We currently play in Higher Power, Rapture, Blind Authority, True Vision, Culprit and some other smaller projects.

-How did you guys end up hooking up with Ola and getting on QC Records?

I've known Ola many years through my old band Violent Reaction and the Shrapnel and True Vision records and she is obviously a big player and spirit in the UK hardcore punk scene. She does a great job with every release and it was a bit of a no brainer really. We're over the moon with how the 7" turned out.

-What bands influence Big Cheese as a whole and personally to you?

I think the ferocity of Cro-Mags' live performances and other related NYHC bands are



definitely a big influence on this band. Other bands like The Icemen/Dynamo, Rest In Pieces, Altercation, Fit of Anger etc.

We all listen to some pretty different things and obviously take a lot of influence from everything but personally for me it's gotta be Agnostic Front and the way Roger tears it up.

-You have played a few shows now, which is the shittest place to play? Venue & atmosphere and anything else that sucked?

I'd say most of the DIY venues we play have a crap sound, wandering drum-kit and knackered mic leads but you've just gotta persevere and bring it regardless. If I was gunna choose one, I'd say the dead-est show but one of the best sounding venues was our show at the Star and Garter in Manchester. Hardly surprising given Manchester hasn't harboured much of a scene recently *winks*

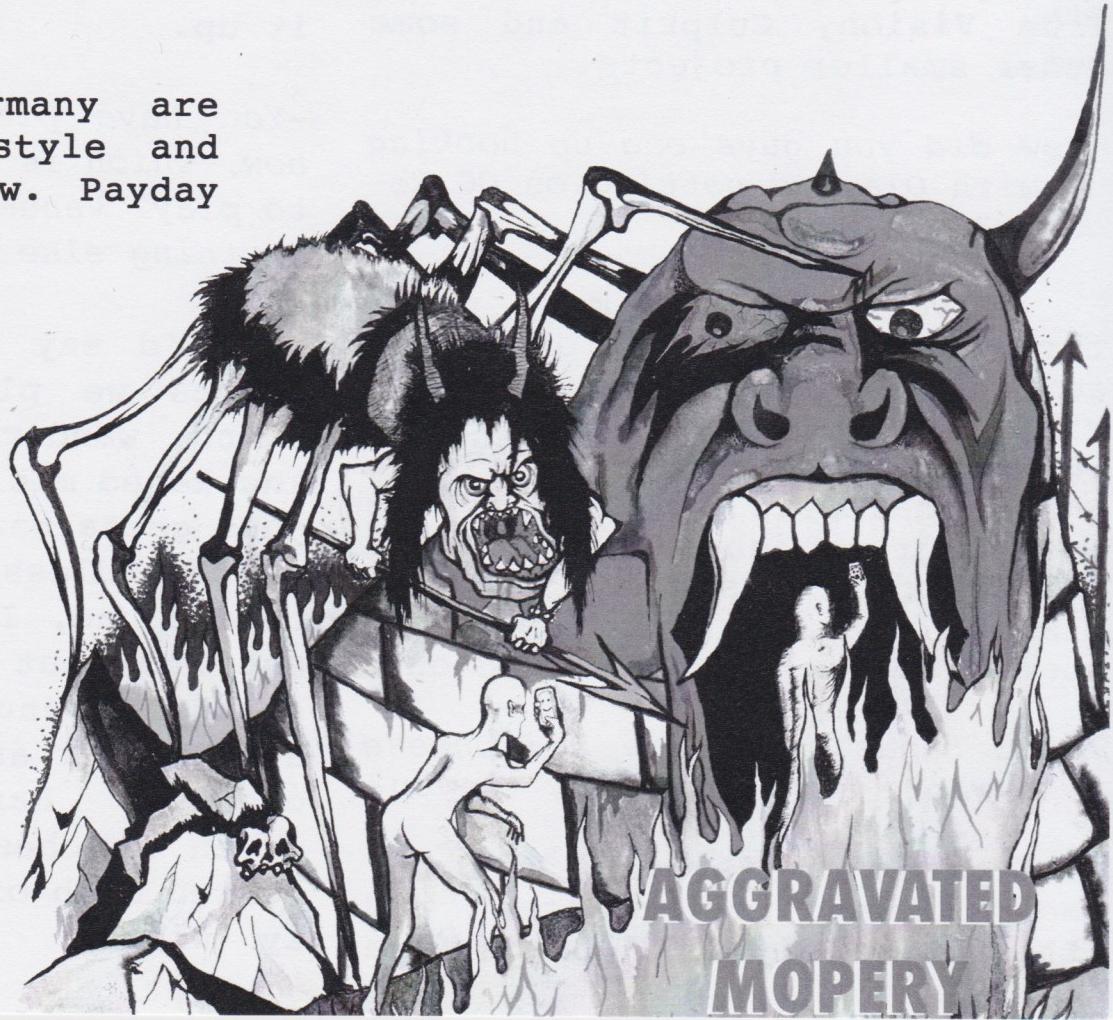


What UK/Euro bands do you think could do well in the states present day?

Exposure from Germany are SICK. Hard clevo-style and put on a good show. Payday would have (RIP). I think Game too. They are phenomenal live, truly. It's hard to gain proper perspective from over the pond of what people are into right now but my best guess is most UK bands will get those juices flowing.

How do you think the Hardcore scene is in the UK right now?

All the bands, none of the fans... I think there's a new band popping up every week but shows seem a bit hard to come by. However, I do want to give a shoutout to true DIY venue Temple of Boom for being the best in the country for showcasing this style of music and for nurturing a solid scene. Never a dull evening thanks to Lecky and Si.



-Where's your favorite UK venue to play? And Europe?

As above, Temple of Boom, Leeds all the way. I really like New River Studios in London where we had our release show. Juz Mannheim is my favourite place in Europe, complete with a gym and a bottomless fridge.

-What have been some of your favorite shows and bands to play with once you started out?

The Higher Power release show at the Hyde Park Book Club. Every band that night rocked the roof off. Vile Spirit always great to play with. Frame of Mind, Stages In Faith, Castigo from Madrid, Arms Race always.

-YOT or COS?

YOT

-Warzone or Agnostic Front?

Agnostic Front

-What kind of stuff do you all do outside of Big Cheese?

Pretty much just work, eat, music and occasionally do a push-up. Meg studies, me and Anth work in the travel industry, Louis is a labourer and Alex is a full-time dog sitter and somebody I worry about full-time.

-What should we be listening to at present?

There's too many good ones to name em all, but off the top of my head... Ammunition, Hank Wood and The Hammerheads, Game, Illusion, Arms Race, Day By Day and Big Cheese ha ha ha

-What's in the works for Big Cheese in 2018?

We are writing an LP, 10 tracks or so. We are also touring Europe with NYHC's illusion in August. More exciting stuff coming early 2019 and hopefully we'll be gracing the US of A soon.

-Cheerz.



THE BAKERSFIELD SOUND

By K.S.

When most people in this town hear that they think of Buck Owens, Merrell Haggard and the Crystal Palace. That's a local Grill here in the, what used to be a, small town of Bakersfield, California. Bakersfield is a farming and oil town, pretty much every where you look you see someone either heading to the oilfields or heading out to harvest whatever produce they grow. It's not really what you would consider a music venue hotspot. I grew up in this small town, in between two of the biggest cities in one of the most populated states in the nation and the music scene that surprisingly thrived in it for a time. Now, in this last half a decade you would be hard pressed to find a show happening in this town maybe once a month. But before that, this town would hold up with some of the best hardcore stops on the map. We had shows almost every night, and for certain, every day of the weekend.

I had some friends and they had a friend who was known for being the show guy; he was always going or playing in them, he was also the guy that when you had a few buddies stay over he would bring his big ass cd organizer and would spend most of the evening playing self appointed DJ. None of us minded. In fact, because of him most of us began going to shows ourselves. We started going to every show that popped up.

There were the lesser-known venues: the boiler room, the backstage, the backroom at golden state

mall, the youth facility at a church. Then you had bars: fish lips, the alley cat, la coruche rouche. Then you had the big boys, and not necessarily "big" as in size, but as in notoriety: Studio 99, the Dome and along with that the backroom to the Dome, this is where a lot of the big festivals would happen as well as the bigger acts that needed more room, pop punk acts like hit the lights, four year strong and metal core acts like, Underoath and A day to remember to name a few. But if you wanted to play at a legendary venue in our town, you wanted to play Jerry's Pizza. Bands like Terror, Stick to your guns, Casey Jones, Point of Recognition, American Nightmare... If you wanted to make sure to have a show that everyone would know about, Jerry's was the place to play.

Most of the time we tried to stay in Bakersfield for shows, and at the time it wasn't hard to do so but sometimes we would have to head out of town. So we were able to experience the difference between a large city scene as opposed to our small town scene. Let me just say there are some big differences. I think the absolute biggest difference is that typically everyone at the shows in our town knew each other. There might be some people me and my friends wouldn't recognize, but for the most part we were always around familiar faces. The other biggest thing was there seemed to be a lot opportunity for local bands to play in our town. If you were a band that just started, you were able to get on a show with bands like The Acacia



Strain, Lionheart, Verse, some of the biggest names in the scene.

The years 2004-2012 were extremely vibrant. Like I said before, you couldn't go a day without a show going down at some venue in Bakersfield. Whether it was local bands like REACH, The Truth of a Liar, Dawn Defeo, or big acts like Bane, The warriors, Have Heart, there was something going down. Everyone was great to each other, so many different walks of life, Straightedge, Crews, Goths, Metal heads, Scene Kids, Indie Kids, we were all cool, everyone got a long. Life was good, my parents, who never understood the whole going to a dive pizza joint and watching a show in a crappy basement with no air conditioning and watching a band no one has ever heard of, but they trusted I would be ok there. There were a few promoters that brought great bands, every band would get paid, no fights would break out during their sets and everyone would go home happy. Then things started to change.

I want to say about 2011 is when I started to notice a difference. A lot of my friends and people I would see at shows stopped coming. More fights started breaking out in the middle of sets. Certain groups would literally come in and beat the living piss out of kids for no apparent reason. Crowd killing became a thing. Hell, I even saw a few guys beat the crap out of a security guard. If you said the wrong thing or wore the wrong thing you would get talked at and possibly beat up. The scene was turning on itself, becoming a dark cloud over a very positive thing. Then a certain promoter, basically "the guy" with all the big shows started stifling bands. All these great bands would come to Bakersfield, not get paid and have to stop in the middle of their set to break up a fight. I don't know how many of you know what playing a show and having to stop in the middle of a song is like, but it totally kills the energy. The crowds started getting smaller, little by little, more and more kids



weren't allowed or just didn't even want to come to shows. Bands stopped wanting to play this town, for good reason.

Eventually, come 2013, the scene had basically died. It became the ghost town of hardcore. Hell, it became the ghost town of music. What's worse about it is, shows are what kept me from getting into things that could get me into trouble, for some it was therapeutic escape. To get away from parents or people that didn't understand you. There, in a crappy basement or stuffy old boxing theater people had a chance to escape reality, to breath, to perform as the little guy, to show what you were made of. The best times of my life were spent at those places. I met my wife because of those shows. To have that taken away because a jerk wouldn't pay bands, because some egotistical jerks wanted to show how hard they were. It sucks, but things have a way of turning around.

Just recently, I feel like our town might be making a comeback, a local skate shop had FURY, one of the hottest up and coming hardcore bands play a show. We have more local bands like Serpents Tongue showing the talent this town still possess. I guess this old guy can have hope that the real Bakersfield Sound the sound that my friends and I grew up with... can come back and STICK TIGHT.

An advertisement for Bakersfield. At the top, four circular icons with the words 'sun', 'fun', 'stay', and 'play' are arranged horizontally. Below them is a large black rectangular box containing the word 'BAKERSFIELD' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. To the left of this box is a road sign that reads 'EXIT UNION AVE. 1.8 MILES'. To the right is the text 'THE SIGN OF A PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY'. Below the text is a historical black and white photograph of a group of people standing in front of a large, modern-looking building with columns, possibly a government or institutional building. The people are dressed in mid-20th-century clothing.

Broke And On The Road

John Doe

In the summer of 2010 the band I was in went on tour with our friends' band; 12 people in a van, most of us broke. And about 3 weeks before we left, the CA state government saw fit to cancel my food stamps. So, as touring bands like to do, there was a lot of theft going on. By hook or by crook we were making it across the country.

While in Pennsylvania we all exited our van and went into a large grocery store. I went around filling up a shopping cart: food, fireworks, a dvd of motorcycle crashes, new socks, a 40 lb box of bananas... And as I exited the store I was promptly surrounded by 3 loss prevention agents and quickly ushered into a security office.

While in the office I could see all monitors for their security cameras. They had footage of all my friends, but they only had the manpower to follow and apprehend one person, and I was that lucky person. After a few minutes I see our van

surrounded by police cars and they have everyone out of the van and they're searching it. The cops weren't actually able to prove who stole any of the groceries they found in the van, and my friends were able to talk in circles enough that the cops just got fed up and had to let everyone go. But not me. I was caught in the act and was off to jail.

For the rest of the day I went through the booking process; paperwork, fingerprints, photos, medical stuff, and hours of staring at a wall. Finally, late at night I was put into a cell with 2 other guys. The 2 beds in the cell were already in use, so they dragged in a plastic bed shaped like a kayak. In the morning they opened our cells; there was a large room with some tables and around the outside of the room was about 12 cells with 2-3 people each. I mostly waited around for hours, wondering what was going on and how long until I could get out, staring at nothing. I finally had a video conference with a judge. I'd have to pay a fine, pay restitution to the store, and I'd be free to go. But it would obviously take the jail hours to process all this, so I was going to be waiting for a while.

Apparently it's really difficult to get approved for vegan/vegetarian meals in jail, so when the food came I just didn't eat. A large black man came up to me and asked me why I wasn't eating (I only mention his race to contrast my small stature and pale skin, and because even in this small holding area different races weren't really hanging out with each other). I told him that they wouldn't give me a vegetarian meal and he promptly turned and yelled at the inmates serving food, "Hey! Get my



man a vegetarian meal!" The guy serving food walked off and came back a minute later with a vegetarian meal.

I drank Kool-Aid and at the stuff on the tray that was obviously vegan and continued to wait for my discharge paperwork. From the bench I sat at I could see through a large window into an office where jail workers did paperwork. I saw a guard walk into the office and speak to a guy at a desk; for some reason I sensed it was about me and it didn't seem good. The guy at the desk looked up, pointed at me and motioned me to the door and they let me in. The other guard says, "There's a bunch of people outside chanting 'Free John Doe'... it's like an episode of *Whale Wars*." Luckily they thought this was funny. I went back to waiting.

They finally started processing my paperwork, then another jail worker came into the office and, again, from the other side of the window, I could tell it was about me. This new guy takes me into a small office and indicates that he saw my intake forms where it specifies my Straight Edge tattoos and he tells me that it is designated as a gang. I was so close to getting out, now all of a sudden everything seems in jeopardy because they might label me as a gang member. It's time to bullshit. I have to spin some long-winded explanation about what

Straight Edge is, and positive lifestyle choices, blah blah blah. Basically a PMA speech. I wouldn't say that anything I said was untrue, it just wasn't how I would ever choose to explain Straight Edge in any other situation. It felt really stupid, but it worked. I went back to waiting and I'd be out soon.

Finally, the time came. They were releasing me. They walked me down a long dark hallway, and at the end was a door of iron bars that I could see daylight through. As I got close I could hear my friends cheering. They swung the door open, and as I came down the stairs a friend handed me a bouquet of flowers and they all picked me up and crowd-surfed me to freedom. They set me down, and suddenly I remembered something: I never got my belongings back. I went to the guard at the door and told him I needed my stuff. He said okay and walked back down the hallway. A few minutes later he came back and said in a matter-of-fact way, "They mailed your things back to California." My wallet, cash, bank card, drivers license, passport... It looked like it was back to shop lifting.



RAY HARKINS

[Ray and I started talking and I started recording in the middle of what Ray was saying]

...The feeling I had when I started watching bands... like I remember seeing The Get Up Kids at Koo's Café and they felt so old, and then years later getting to know Matt Pryor, the dudes like 4 years older than me. But because you're watching it at a time and place, they feel older than you.

-When I've listened to your podcast, and you're talking about shows from like '97, I think like, "that would have been so cool to have been there." But really I'm not that far removed from that, but anything that came before you has this mystique and it feels like distant history and seems so much cooler.

Yeah, I totally agree, but to a point. Like the shows at Huntington Beach Library were ending right when I was becoming aware of independent spaces and things like that, and I think that would have been cool. But then I look at shows from the 80's, like the huge Black Flag shows in LA, and in certain respects I think that would be cool to watch, but also my total suburb-boy upbringing, I would be like, "this is terrifying, I could get killed."

-I feel like when I came into the Hardcore scene in Orange County, it was never violent. And you hear these old stories about like Fender's Ballroom and other places being super violent. And sometimes it seems like people glorify this past where things were super dangerous, but I'm glad that there wasn't a ton of violence, and any fights got broken up, and most of the older guys were pretty cool...

Yeah, a lot of that stuff is totally mythologized, like the old adage of walking barefoot through the snow to school, and that's like how people describe their experiences at shows in the 80's. But I do remember there being fights. Maybe not the specific instances or what the fights were about, but they happened. As opposed to now, I can't remember the

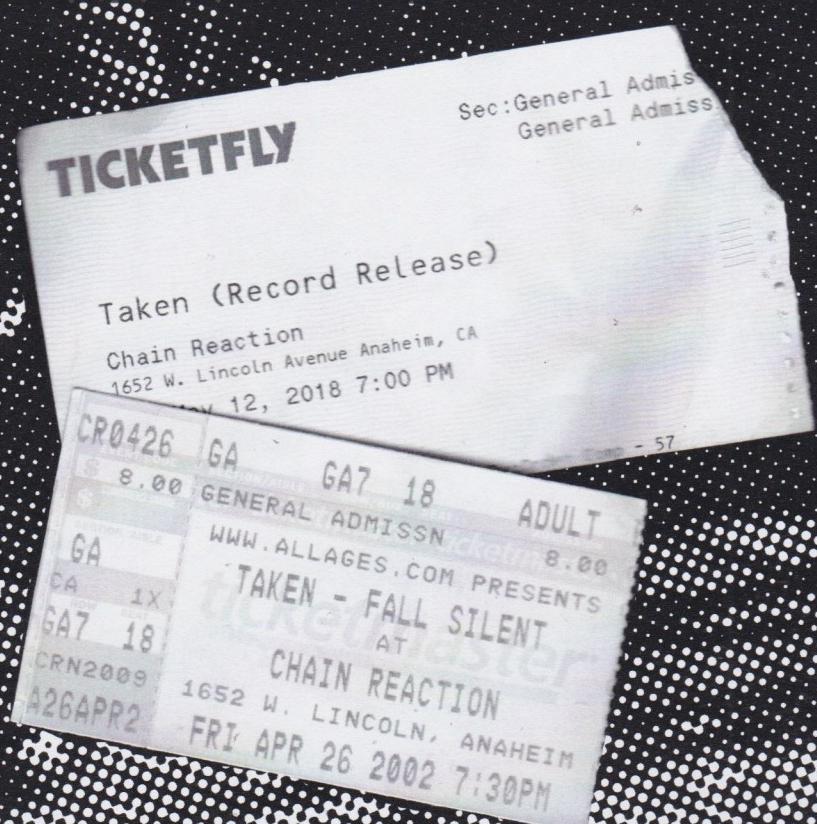
happened. As opposed to now, I can't remember the last time I saw a fight at a show. I get so bummed out because I feel like it is such a sign of disrespect, to the band and the space and the people putting on the show and the other people there.

-There was a long period where I just listened to hardcore without being able to go to shows, so my knowledge of hardcore was through lyrics and photos on inserts and the Revelation All Ages book and whatever folklore existed that made its way to me. So I thought I was going to have to go to shows and fight Nazis and it's a constant battle, but it wasn't like that.

Yeah, and especially in Orange County where you're mostly drawing from suburbs. You didn't have to prepare and be like, Okay I've got my brass knuckles... you just didn't have to do that. It wasn't like this warzone, where you might be like, "why would I want to do this every weekend?"

-So what was your introduction to hardcore and straight edge, and what was going on at that time?

I came in via punk, so bands like the Descendents were huge for me, and I found them through the movie Pump Up The Volume with Christian Slater.



"If you played Youth of Today-'Break Down The Walls' and Ignite-'Call On My Brothers' side by side, I'd choose Ignite 99% of the time."

Slater. And I remember seeing a Descendents cd at a place called the CD Listening Bar and I thought it was great. So getting into the Descendents, NOFX, No Use For A Name, all of the Epitaph bands, eventually I started to notice that some bands had songs that were "heavier" and more extreme. Then I found the first Victory Style comp, it had cartoons of people at a show jumping on each other and it was \$4...

-Were you familiar with any of the bands on there?

I had no idea. I had maybe heard of Strife, but nothing that I was familiar with. It looked cool. I obviously got into all the heavy hitters first: Earth Crisis, Snapcase and Strife were all on the comp. But it was the left-of-center stuff that I found myself really being attracted to: Deadguy, Guilt... Since I had no one to direct me, the stuff I really got into was the stuff that was a bit more esoteric. But I'm glad I got into both sides and I appreciated a balance of both.

And on the cover of that comp was a person with an X on their hand. And I was already aware of Minor Threat and knew what Straight Edge was, but it wasn't until Straight Edge was transported into modern times for me that I realized that there was a movement that existed around me. And once I went deeper into the Victory Records rabbit hole, I found out about New Age Records and the things that were going on locally, and it wasn't this thing that happened 15 years ago. It existed in my space.

-You were transitioning from punk, so hearing stuff like Earth Crisis and Deadguy, those weren't too abrasive for you? You still found those accessible?

It was. I was never a metal kid, but I think that with how aggressive those bands were, and coupling it up with the messages they were espousing made me see the difference between the two. And especially with a band like Deadguy, you can't listen to Tim Singer and not feel his frustration and anger, the visceralness, I didn't feel like there was any artifice about it. And I can express that now, but if you asked me at 16 I would have just been like, "this dude's pissed!"

-What year did you start Taken?

That officially started, I want to say, '98. I think in February or March we played our first show at Showcase.

-How do you feel like Taken fit into the larger Orange County scene?

We absolutely did not... (both laugh)

-Alright, cause that's kind of how I felt but I didn't want to say it if you didn't feel the same way.

No, it's absolutely true. And there's multiple things that added into that. Most of the metallic hardcore, all of that stuff starting to pop in the late 90's, it predated us by a year or more. And all of those guys went to school together; Huntington High, Newport Harbor... So when you have 15 dudes all rolling around together and supporting each other and into each others music, whereas I went to Orange Lutheran which is 22 miles away from anywhere in Orange County. And the drummer and bassist of Taken also went to Orange Lutheran, and we had 2 dudes from Yorba Linda. So being in a small, private, religious school and being like 1 of 4 kids into independent music, we didn't have anybody to really



WORDS OR LESS

WITH RAY HARKINS

reach out to for shows. So because of that we were kind of on the outside looking in. And also sonically we just didn't have a lot of the same touchstones that some of the other bands were going for. We were never heavy enough to satisfy the kids who wanted to mosh, and we were too heavy to play like a pop punk show. But we inspired a reaction out of people, good or bad. And in retrospect I really like that.

-It always seemed like the kids who liked Taken were the kids who liked screamo, or the kids who straddled the line between emo and hardcore. Do you think that's fair?

Yeah, definitely. And I think that is because we literally played with anybody. And part of that was due to circumstances, such as I was booking shows at Koo's Café, and anything remotely aggressive I was able to get Taken on. We would play whatever and wherever. So we could pull in people who didn't identify with a lot of the other stuff going on in the area.

The early version of Bleeding Through shared members with Taken, and in my memory it seemed like BT was instantly huge. Was there any professional jealousy on your part because of that?

Oh yeah, absolutely. But I could not be more into those people, and supportive of them. But without putting any music out yet, and having played like one show, they already had a follow-

ing, and being like 19 or 20 at the time I saw that and was like, They're already more popular than us. But it never inspired me to talk crap.

-With a lot of those bands gaining national notoriety and doing larger tours, is that a potentially negative thing for hardcore?

There were certain instances where it felt like things grew too quickly, in part due to the external pressures that started to happen. But you saw it more in the scene in general growing so large, and with that the idea or desire to participate didn't exist as much; starting bands, taking photos, doing zines... a lot of that connectivity was removed in exchange for the entertainment/going to a show value. But you also have people who get exposed and may never have gone to an independent record store before, now they may be impacted by the music in a really important way. So there's trade-offs.

-Kind of related: in Orange County, when I started going to shows, there wasn't much of a D.I.Y. thing going on. All the shows were at Chain Reaction or Showcase, there wasn't really kids doing zines and setting up shows and it wasn't as if every one I knew was starting bands.

I think some of that has to do with a huge shift in platforms, the changing of music from a physical format to a digital format. And the same thing can be said about zines, and having the ability to



put that content online. And a lot of it has to do with the growing pains from that perspective, and the changing way in which people consume stuff.

-There has been so many old photos or interviews that I've seen and read on the internet, that seem to be impossible to find. They're essentially gone. They only exist as long as someone cares to maintain their site or blog. Doing a podcast, is that something you think about?

Well, I look back at some of the zines I have kept, and some of the controversial things people have said, and it is completely of that time and place. Its childish, either what that person said or how others reacted to that, and there's no way you or I could explain how big of a deal something like that was, or the drama that came of it, to someone 10 years younger than us. So I think from a certain nostalgic sense it is a shame that some of this stuff might be lost, but it isn't always something that needs to be revisited. And in certain respects it's cool that it goes away, because it's not relevant.

But part of the reason for doing the podcast is building a context for these things. And that's why I'm passionate about it; I am capturing these peoples' lives in a somewhat tangible format. So as long as people listen to mp3's in 20 years...

-When you were on tour with Taken, what were the shows like... were the shows big, were you playing to 50 kids in a basement...?

It was mostly the 50 kids in a basement. The biggest tour we did was with Between the Buried and Me, Alexisonfire, and It Dies Today in 2003. Generally speaking we played to 200+ people a night. Prior to that we toured with Darkest Hour, Curl Up And Die, and it was always surprising when you showed up to a place and it felt like you were watching a scene. And it was interesting seeing these snapshots, and where you got a response and the makeup of the scene there.

You were not just the dude from Taken, but you were also the dude who worked at Bionic (record store). That was the end of an era where record stores were really important to a person's exposure and consumption of music. How do you feel about that looking back?

Most of my musical upbringing happened during those years. It totally opened up my musical pallet. And I was really thankful for that, because, in turn, I got to be that person for other people; I cannot tell you how easy it was to put on At The Gates' "Slaughter of the Soul" and sell it to any hardcore kid who walked through the door. And I'm really nostalgic for that because it was a hub, a meeting place for people to be introduced to other styles of music.

-You've mentioned in your podcast that your parents didn't really "get it". But, since you were/are involved, and you do "get it", do you think that will be a potential turn off for your son?

Absolutely. But we are way more pop culture aware than our parents were. And the thing I go over in my head constantly is, What is my kid going to bring home that I'm going to be bummed on? And I can't think of it, maybe because it's something that hasn't even been discovered yet. But I want him to just be into music in general. Right now he loves Beauty and the Beast, and seeing him sing those songs is awesome. But having my child recognize that music is an important part of peoples lives is all I can really give to him. But I don't want to overwhelm with the things I like and make him a carbon copy of me.

-Not too long ago someone posted a new Fall Out Boy song, and FOB isn't hardcore, but...

Hardcore adjacent...

Exactly. And midway through the song there was a weird hip-hop, breakdown, bass drop thing... and it was just like sensory overload listening to it. Is there going to come a time when all music has to be like that: super dynamic with lots of different elements, bludgeoning and brutalizing you the entire time... will the evolution of music make all past hardcore seem boring?

I think that happens all the time. Like a lot of the metallic hardcore from the early 90's, like Chokehold, it's unlistenable. The recordings are terrible. But you can't retroactively go back there, devoid of context, you can't give a kid who is kind of starting to experiment with Gorilla Biscuits a Chokehold record and tell them that it's incredibly important. They'd be like, "this sounds like trashcans being thrown down a hallway." And it totally does.

So in some respects, the kind of timelessness of recordings is even more important than what it was 10-15 years ago. You have to keep that in mind; that someone is going to be listening to it in the future. A lot of it is that recording quality. The bands that exist now will likely sound less dated than older bands.





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I feel like most of Orange County hardcore was pretty atheistic, if not outright critical of religion. Did you ever have any internal struggle with that?

I never did. Taken never espoused to be a Christian band. There was nothing that I was uncomfortable with, I just took a lot of that stuff as being part of the overall context of that music scene. And on the opposite side of things, I hated playing Christian shows, because I would be selling merch and someone would come up to me and be like, "are you saved, brother?" People would open up a cd, look at my lyrics, and decide whether or not they could buy that cd. It was intense at that time.

-I don't want to get to personal, but just from seeing your instagram I've seen some things about your wife's battle with cancer. Did that ever cause a sort of crisis of faith for you?

Very valid question. Any crisis of faith, or my evolution of faith, has always had to do with how religion has done positive or negative things in this world. And I've always kept those 2 worlds apart; whatever happens to me or the people I care about, I don't go to that spot of, Why did you do this to me, God? So the entire process of my wife being diagnosed with cancer and going through chemotherapy, I was never reflecting on, Why me?, or, "how is this affecting my relationship with God?" So I never really had those dark nights of the soul.

Taken is recording a new EP. With these things you've experienced in life recently, is your subject matter going to change, have you gotten new perspective from this?

Yeah, I had an entirely different set of lyrics, and then all this happened, and I was like, I can't sing about this... so I rewrote them, and now the whole EP is about what my wife has gone through, and every step that someone goes through when they're confronted with a life altering sickness.



GREG BENNICK

-You're not originally from Seattle are you?

I'm actually from Connecticut.

-When did you move to Seattle?

I moved to Seattle in 1991 to study acting at Cornish College of the Arts.

-You were already into punk and hardcore before that right?

Totally. I got into punk and hardcore around 1985/1986 in Connecticut. A friend of mine – this is going to sound archaic as if from the era of dinosaurs – had climbed up on the roof of his house and directed a radio antenna he'd put up there towards New York City to pick up radio stations playing punk and hardcore. He came over to my house with those songs recorded onto cassette. He played me The Meatmen, the Angry Samoans, Alien Sex Fiend, and the Circle Jerks. It just changed everything.

-And when you got to Seattle what was going on at that time?

I remember I went to visit Seattle in January of 1991 and went to a venue that is now defunct called the OK Hotel. I saw Undertow open for 2 other bands and Poison Idea. I went up to Undertow after the show and started asking them, "How big is the Straight Edge scene here? How big is the hardcore scene?" and they and their friends looked at each other and started laughing and just said, "We're it. It's just us." So, what was going on there at the time was sort of the tail end of Brotherhood and that era...and the beginning of Undertow's ascendancy.

-Some of what I'm interested in is how technology has changed hardcore and how the experience of the average kid in the scene is different than what it used to be. Such as YouTube completely replacing the trading of VHS tapes. And one time I bought a tape of an Inside Out reunion in Salt Lake from the early 90's and it had you juggling on stage before their set. Could you tell the story of how that came about?

Dude, that is madness that you got that VHS tape. You're the first person in 24 years who I ever heard got that VHS back in the day from somebody. Because when those shows were filmed it was the understanding of everyone on the tour that none of those videos would ever be shared because of major label rules regarding Zach because of Rage Against the Machine. And I know that I held on to my VHS copies; people could view them but no one could borrow them.

What had happened was in 1992 the Rage Against the Machine album came out. I was struck by the potency and intensity of the album. In the back of the record there was a line amidst the liner notes that said, "For propaganda send a self-addressed stamped envelope to this address."

I was like, "Yeah! I want propaganda! Let's start the revolution!" So, I wrote to the address, but the letter got sent back: 'Return to sender, address unknown'. And that pissed me off, because I was like, "Wait...the revolution is over before it's even started." RATM was playing a few months later, opening for House of Pain in Seattle. I went to the show and I wanted to hand the returned letter to Zach directly. So, after RATM ended and House of Pain started, I went out to the RATM tour bus. Their roadie at the time was Mark Hayworth who had played bass in Inside Out. We started chatting a little bit. Zach eventually came off the bus and I handed him the letter and he was surprised and taken aback that the address wasn't good and that people may have been disappointed. I ended up sitting in on an interview that Zach was having with some other local hardcore kids where he talked about the upcoming Inside Out reunions. When we got back to the tour bus I asked Mark Hayworth to let me know when the shows were happening and gave him my address. And he wrote to me a letter in '93 and told me that the shows were happening in August 1993, and there were to be five shows: Salt Lake City, Sacramento, San Diego, Northridge and Fullerton.

I didn't have a way to get to the first show in SLC. So, I had a friend help me buy a used motorcycle out of the newspaper; a Suzuki GS750. I'd never ridden a motorcycle and in the week which followed, he taught me how to ride it. Then I went and got my motorcycle license, barely passing the test. I left for Salt Lake City, and since I had waited til the last minute I didn't have any gear. So I wore a World War 2 looking half helmet I bought from Goodwill, some gardening gloves, a few layers of flannel shirts, hiking boots, goggles from a science class, and I strapped the juggling props I used to make a living with at the time onto the back of the motorcycle and rode over 800 miles to Salt Lake City. I arrived after two days, and I just went to the address on the letter that Mark Hayworth had written me. I got to the house and the guys from the bands came out and Mark was like, "Wait...you're the guy from Seattle..." and Zach was looking at the stuff on the back of my bike and asked what it was. I told him I juggled, and he asked to see. I started juggling right there in front of the house and everyone in all of the bands were like "Oh my god! You should do that at the show", and that's how it all started. I went up on stage the next night, talked about Western Shoshone Nation's sovereignty issues with the United States government and juggled and ate fire. It went so well that everyone invited me to do that on the other nights of tour. I left my motorcycle in Salt Lake and rode with the band. And after the tour back in Salt Lake City I rode the motorcycle home to Seattle and never rode it again.

-That is such a good story. Getting back to Seattle: Trial was basically starting when Undertow was ending, right?

Yes, almost interchangeably. I don't remember the exact timeline, but Undertow had broken up. Right around that time we got offered to play a show at the King Cat Theatre and the lineup was insane. It was us, Orange 9mm, Korn, and Sick of It All. I think that even though they had broken up, Undertow wanted to be on that show, but the promoter approached and asked us

instead upon hearing that they were no more. We were brand new at the time. It might have been our second show.

-With *Undertow* ending did it feel like the hardcore scene in Seattle was changing? Did you guys feel some sort of obligation to step up and carry some *Straight Edge* torch?

It definitely felt like a huge transition point. You can identify clearly the early years of Seattle hardcore: the Brotherhood era preceded me living there. It seemed almost magical, like a group of friends who literally created something out of nothing. And *Undertow* continued that when Brotherhood broke up. I think they started when they were like 14. They took that over and ran with it. They did a West Coast tour, they went to Europe, they did things no one else from the area had done. And when they were breaking up it was definitely a transition point. We didn't feel like we were stepping up to fill their shoes because we weren't even sure yet what we were doing. In retrospect it seems to fit, but at the time I don't think it was a conscious choice for us to try and fill a void of some kind. Because it didn't really feel like *Undertow* was truly gone. Everyone was still fans of them and their influence was immense.

-So there wasn't like a massive drop off, like, *Undertow* breaks up and half the *Straight Edge* kids disappear?

No, I don't remember that happening at all. My recollection was that everyone was *Undertow*-infused, and that stayed true for years and years, to the benefit of the scene: that a band had that lasting influence and so much love.

-On the *Trial* DVD, one of the things that always stuck out to me was some live footage where a you're speaking and a heckler yells something and you deal with it in the least confrontational way: you address what he says, you refer to him as your "new friend," and you diffuse the situation without turning this guy off to what you were saying. Was that already part of your personality, or was that something you had to develop when you started talking about serious issues and wanted to reach out to people?

If Timm McIntosh were here, he would agree with the following statement: that when *Trial* first started, I was a fun destroyer. I was so in my head and so angry and so upset. I was so intolerant of people's critique. For example, in the early days when I would read a bad review of one of our releases, I would write an insanely detailed letter to the person doing the zine telling them why they were wrong. I would take their opinion, and analyze them in excruciating detail and strike them down like I was grading a term paper. When Timm and Derek found out they were like, "You have to stop doing this, this is insane." And over time I realized that sure, I might get an ego boost if I cut down a heckler or lash out at someone who is critical, but there is actually less benefit than engaging in conversation with somebody. I think that over time that came out of a recognition that to de-escalate a situation and address

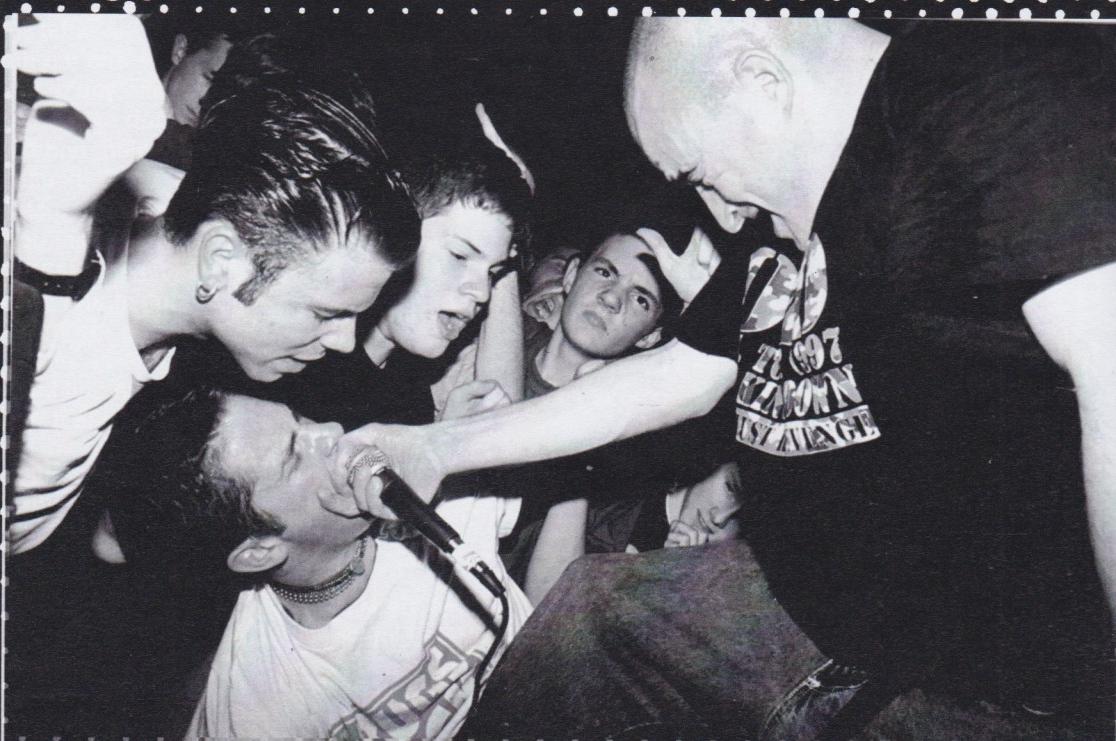
it in a different way was more effective and might lead to more growth. And I don't mean that condescendingly, as in more growth in the heckler, but more growth in me and some growth between us.

-Was it hard to sort of set your ego aside and do things like that?

Yeah! It's impossible! But the thing is, if I'm on stage and emoting and sharing something that I think is tremendously important and someone heckles me part of my brain immediately thinks, "How could you undercut a genuine emotion?" You want to defend yourself. Human beings are desperate for significance and desperate to be involved in projects and moments of meaning. When someone undercuts those things it's like a blow to your psychological self. Putting our egos aside - and even if we begin to do that a little bit - communicates a lot. The times that I lash out in the moment, or when I speak if I feel insecure without thinking first, I always regret it.

-The next question has to do with ideas or things that you said that, on the surface, seemed at odds: Recently you did a speaking tour that was titled "Post Truth Culture", and in the intro for the new *Trial* "Early Years" record you wrote that there are inaccuracies to history and that no one will ever get it right; as if there is no objective "truth". So on the one hand it seems like your advocating for there being a "truth" and on the other like there is no obtainable truth... are these ideas at odds?

I can see how that would have been confusing, but it's mostly if the focus is on the word "truth" itself instead of on the context. With the "Post Truth" spoken word tour, I was speaking throughout Mexico about the Trump administration intentionally lying about reality to serve its needs. For example, using the term "fake news" to describe as untrue any story which Trump himself doesn't like. While opinions can differ on an event, there's no denying facts. The term "alternative facts" as the White House said once, just doesn't cut it. Intentionally denying or manipulating facts is what I was going after with the "Post Truth Culture" tour. In the *Trial* record I was speaking to



interpretations of an event in history by seeing it from different perspectives, but not denying that the event took place. We could all be at the same show and all experience that show differently. All watching the same band. But in a single moment, I am watching a stage diver while you're watching the guitarist, while someone else is ordering a drink at the bar, and someone else is tying their shoe. Every one of those people will have a different version of what happened in that moment but they will all be commenting on the same event. An actual event which took place, undeniably. No one will ever get the exact interpretation of the whole experience "right" but no one will declare that the event didn't happen at all without sounding like an unrepentant lunatic.

-So is there an absolute truth that people can strive for?

As human beings, we need to stand on some foundation of truth or we crumble psychologically. But the thing is, do we have the mental wherewithal, the psychological strength, and the emotional maturity to realize that the truths that we stand upon today in terms of history might be dead ass wrong at some point when we reflect on them later? And I mean our values. Not events themselves. Slavery, sexism, capitalism. All of those seemed like good ideas to someone at the time. We need to be able to be adaptable and changeable for tomorrow to create a new foundation to stand upon, based on the truths of the past. I don't think there is a clear absolute truth. Strife seemed to think there was only one truth, so you should ask those guys.

-Well, if we are going to change our opinion, and if we are going to say that these old truths and foundations we stood upon were wrong, what are we going to hold up as our guiding light toward "absolute truth"? Who says these new ideas are Truth? The only idea that I have is a scientific basis for determining truth, because everything else seems subjective...

Sure, absolutely. But if you try and base everything on science you're not going to feel very alive. You're going to be sacrificing feeling in exchange for thinking at all time and I don't think that an imbalance like that sounds very human, or even very desirable. But for example, if we were to look at our Straight Edge from the viewpoint of science, how would we meter its efficacy and truth? We could potentially cognitively study the degenerative effects of alcohol and drugs and therefore decide that making a different life choice is the best idea. That doesn't sound very fun. We could alternatively study it from the feeling we get when we are X'd up and stage diving. But while more fun and to the spirit of the edge, that isn't as easily quantifiable. What would we base our determination on? One of the things that makes Straight Edge so important to me IS the history, the legacy, the present, the friendships, the simultaneous agreement that drinking and drugs aren't great and that we're doing so much more with our sobriety and clarity. I don't think there is science in that choice, but maybe there is and I'm just not realizing it. My absolute truth is based on feelings. I am a shitty straight edge scientist.

-When I first heard "Are These Our Lives" I borrowed the Equal Vision Records cd version from a friend; did it not have lyrics included with it?

The original cd had all the lyrics with it. But I was sitting at home one day and got an email from a kid in Australia telling me his cd didn't have lyrics. I thought it must have been a mistake. Then I got another email from a kid in Australia, then another. All were saying the same thing. What had happened was Equal Vision had changed the layout and taken out all the lyrics in order to save money. I'm not saying that it is the most important issue of all time, but I'm pretty happy with the lyrical contribution to the experience of that record, and I don't think that EVR even gave it a thought at the time. They were thinking in terms of numbers and finances, not in terms of the impact that knowing the lyrics might have.



Before this next question/story I have to give a disclaimer that it is not to undermine your lyrics, because I do in fact love the Trial lyrics. But a while back I bought the Panic Records version of "Are These Our Lives" while in San Francisco, and while killing time before a show started, a friend and I sat in my car reading the lyrics in the form of overly passionate poetry. And since she wasn't familiar with the songs, the lyrical structure was completely different and it was hilarious. So I guess when you're writing lyrics you're probably not thinking about how people are going to re-appropriate those lyrics 20 years later...

I love this the most. You prefaced the question with "disrespect", as if I'd be mad. If it was 1996 I'd be yelling at you and writing you an angry letter on paper with a pen about how your opinion is wrong and the ninety sub-points as to why, which all support my central thesis. But right now, today, I'm overjoyed by that because it's funny. I love that you did it. I want to go and read my own lyrics to myself in a dramatic way and entertain myself. When I'm writing, I'm given the music first and I write to the music, so there is never a time when lyrics exist on a page without music. So that's really interesting to me to think of them as independent poetry.

-Is Between Earth and Sky still together? Because I remember hearing the compilation song you did, and I loved it, and then it seemed like years before anything else came out.

We are the most glacially slow moving band in history. But the story behind our initial slowness is a historical one. When the band Civ formed, they got signed before their first show. And, since I was a fun destroyer at the time, that idea was offensive to me in a silly way. It seemed like they didn't even have to do anything, but of course they did...they worked for years in all their other bands. Still, when BE&S formed I decided half as a joke, but we followed through with it, that we were going to out-do Civ. We were going to get signed before we even had our first practice. I was absolutely committed to that concept. So, for the first 5 years as a band we never practiced. We just sent riffs around and recorded things individually in pieces in the studio. And when the first compilation song came out, Robert from Refuse Records in Europe asked if he could put out our record, and I was like, "Cool! Okay, how we can practice...." Ridiculous but true. Since then, in all seriousness, a number of personal things have happened in everyone's lives, and our tragedies never align. There have been deaths and breakups and all sorts of things. As a result, we move very slowly. But our commitment to one another is that we will never ever break up and will keep doing things even if it takes a while. There are currently 12 demos for new songs which I have not written lyrics to, and we will put out an album in 2018. I have two other music projects in the works too.

-Lyrically, what are the best Straight Edge songs of all time? And if you include "This is Not a Trend" I fully back it.

There are so many Earth Crisis songs and so many Youth of Today songs that encapsulate the feeling of Straight Edge for me, and since some of those songs just completely define the genre, that I'm just going to include both of their discographies as answer number one.

"I tend to go off of feeling rather than thinking, but now that I hear myself say it I'm not sure if that's actually true..."

Uniform Choice - "No Thanks". That's the song that inspired me to quit drinking. The line, "if drinking's what it takes to be accepted / I'd rather stay aware and be rejected," changed everything for me. I was 17 years old doing acid with my friends, drinking all the time, smoking pot all the time, and being unhappy all the while. And I read that lyric and was like, "So that's a thing? That's possible?" I remember exactly where I was when I heard it, I was driving in Woodbury Connecticut up a hill. I remember exactly where I was in that moment, and I realized I didn't have to be getting high and drunk anymore and thought, "Oh my god, yeah, this..." and it changed my life.

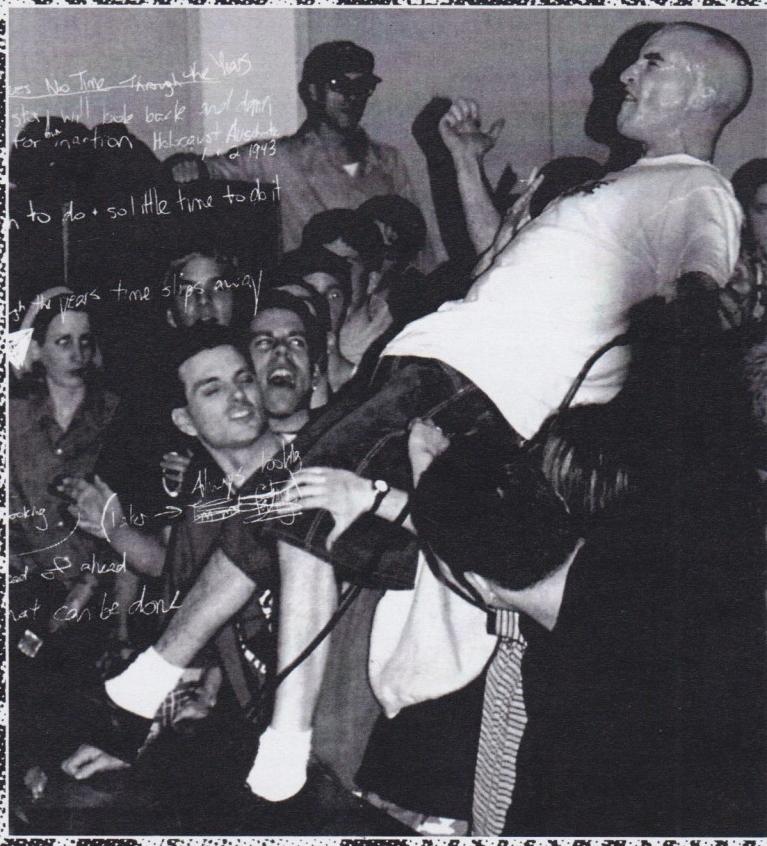
If I include "This Is Not a Trend" I have to be honest and say that I wrote it not just about straight edge but about alternative culture overall. I remember in interviews I would often say that the song was about straightedge, but also about other alternative cultures like punk, goth, and so on. Timm asked me to stop saying "goth" because he hated goth at the time. hahaha! I do love the song, its fun. I remember I was really insecure about the song when we wrote and recorded it, because while I was really feeling it and was hoping it would resonate, I wasn't sure if it would. I was just in a cluster fuck in my head about it. After we recorded it we took it back to Timm's apartment, and he was living with Jake Conroy, and we pressed play on the cd and Jake was listening to the whole record, and when it got to "This Is Not a Trend" his eyes just lit up. I think he actually started to mosh in the living room by himself. And that moment, that external validation, was all I needed to realize the song was going to go over well with people.

-[I pull out the insert for the Trial "Early Years record] In this picture are you wearing jeans shorts, white socks, and dress shoes? [see photo, upper right]

This is amazing. It is entirely possible that that is exactly what I'm wearing! This is a very fashionable picture obviously. I will find the original photo to print along with this question so people can see that I am a fashion visionary and that fashion worldwide has not yet caught up with this moment back in 1996. I think your readers should bring back that look.

-[Pull out Genuine record] "C'mon Pacific Northwest, last chance to dance." You don't really strike me as a mosh call out type of guy, and on a studio recording... that's pretty hard...

Let me say that this is now my favorite interview that I've ever done. No one asks about that LP! Aaron Edge approached us all with the idea for an album. It was all the singers of every band in the northwest at the time. I went into the studio with an



idea to do a pit call. When I got behind the microphone I was having a really tough time with my voice, but I had to pull it together in order to record this pit call for once and forevermore. There was a bunch of us in the studio together, and when I yelled, "C'mon Pacific Northwest, last chance to dance [little riff comes in], Move it!", everyone was like, "Oh my god, what did you just say?" and I was so happy about that.

-What advice would you give to newer hardcore bands?

Simultaneously disregard everything you have heard and, at the same time, allow things that you have heard throughout history and into the present to inspire you. It's this weird duality. We run the risk of short changing our potential to express ourselves and our potential to analyze politics and social situations through lyrics if we pay too much attention to what's come before. Yet, there is so much inspiration to gain from what's come before. Let it be okay to be inspired by others, but don't lose sight of your own vision, voice, lyrical approach, and your approach to writing riffs. It all has to be about finding some level of clarity in your own self-expression and at the same time some level of energy in the passion that is genuinely yours. Wherever your influences come from, make sure that this is the result at the end of the day.

-When you're young it's easy to look at hardcore as having so much power and potential. With the benefit of age do you still see it as having the same power to affect change?

I think that it does have the power to make change because I've seen it happen in individual lives. Hardcore for me has and continues to be more of a one on one transformative experience than a group dynamic revolutionary transformation experience. It is both. But the true power I have found has come in individual transformation. People having their minds and lives and emotions shifted, transformed and changed as a result of hardcore: that to me has always been true, is always there, and I get so much inspiration out of it.



-Between music, film, speaking, juggling, you keep pretty busy, what other projects do you have going on right now?

I'm writing the biography of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker who wrote about human fear of death on a subconscious level and how that influenced human behavior. That project is entirely intimidating and even when I talk about it I just want to drop everything and run across this parking lot and never be heard from again. Trying to develop One Hundred For Haiti, which is the nonprofit that my friends and I do in Haiti. It is a development organization focusing on clean water and anti-violence initiatives. We are trying to expand and develop it further in order to help more people - ultimately with the goal of it disappearing because there would be no need for it. That should be the goal of all social service organizations. To not have to exist anymore because the problem is solved or complete. I recently put into motion an idea for a spoken word record where I am speaking over three-minute long songs written by different friends of mine. I have two docu-

mentaries in production right now. "Holding These Moments" about the final BANE tour. And "On The Wild Side" a documentary about the anti-hunting movement worldwide. All that and music keeps my time pretty full.

-Alright, I think that's about all the questions I had, any final words?

Dude, I think that's all the question and answers that can exist. But I encourage people to get in contact with me anytime.

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Get in touch with Greg or check out his projects:

<http://gregbennick.com>

<http://wordsasweapons.com>

<http://www.onehundredforhaiti.org>

<https://betweenthreethandsky.bandcamp.com>

And check out Greg's new band, Bystander. 7" out soon on Safe Inside Records.

Special thanks to Robert at Refuse Records for letting me use photos. Check out the recently released Trial - "Early Years 2xLP on Refuse Records.

"... have I not been intoxicated by a crush on somebody, to the point that i am completely out of my mind and not at all in touch with my surroundings? 100%! As recently as yesterday!..."



SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

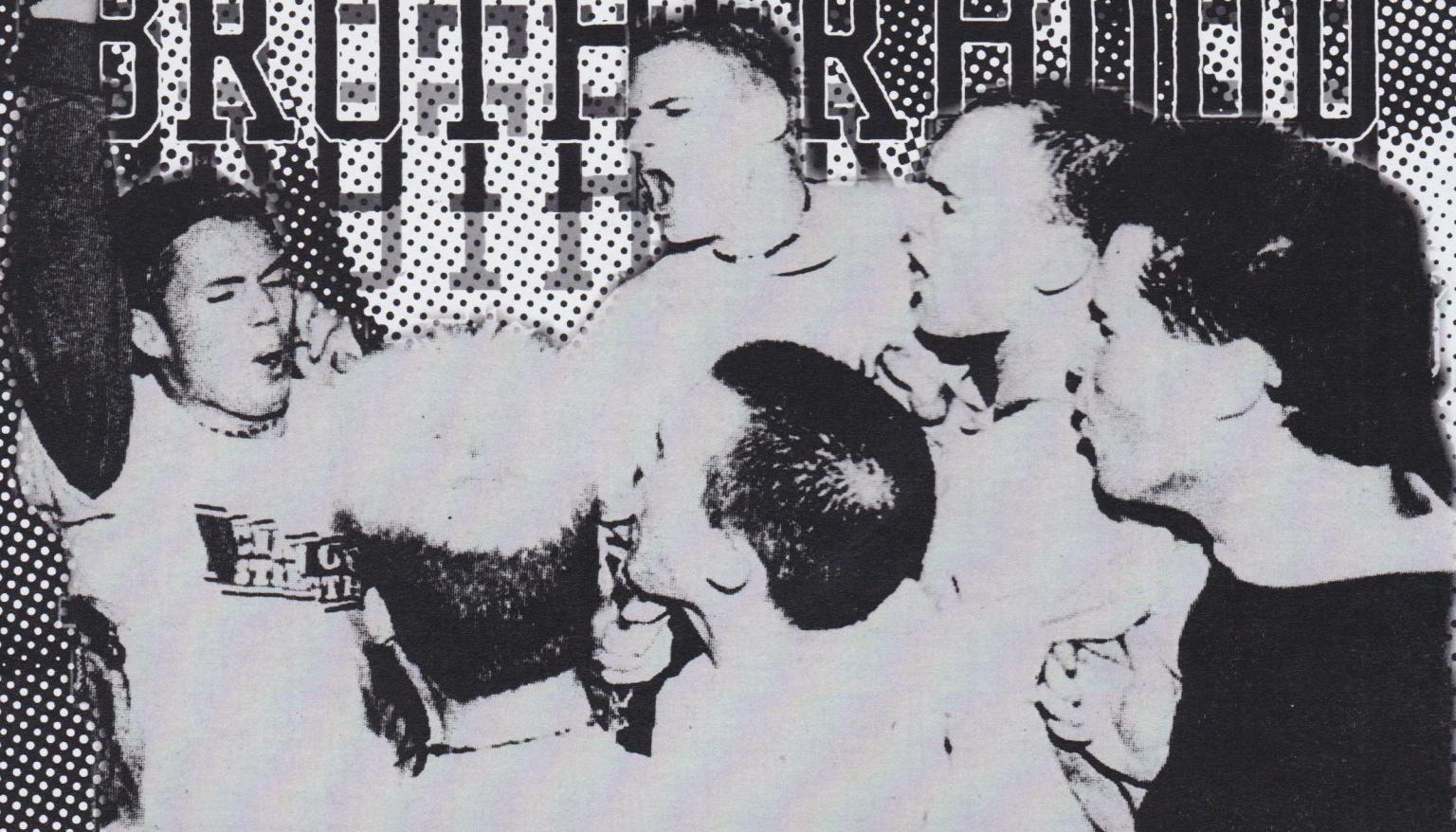
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Thanks for checking out the 'zine and thanks to all the people I interviewed and who helped out.

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BROTHERHOOD



Why does every
kid in this scene
suddenly want to
be “someone you
don’t want to
fuck with?”

Fuck the bad boy fantasy. I’m on the side of good.

seas



VEGAN

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